

## **Instruction**

### **Library Collection Development and Maintenance; Library Displays and Programs, Library Material Review and Reconsideration**

The Hamden Board of Education (the "Board"), having consulted with the Superintendent of Schools for the Hamden Public Schools (the "District"), the District's director of curriculum or a person in an equivalent position, and a librarian employed by the Board, adopts this Policy Regarding Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration in accordance with Connecticut law.

It is the policy of the Board to ensure that all District library materials maintained by the District are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Connecticut law, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Any school library media specialist or school library staff member who, in good faith, implements this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

The Board shall review this policy, and update it as necessary, every five years.

#### **I. Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy:

- "*Individual with a vested interest*" means any school staff member employed by the Board, the parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed, and any student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed.
- "*Library and other educational material*" means any material belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a District school library media center, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material, software and other material not required as part of classroom instruction.
- "*Remove*" means deliberately taking library material out of a library's collection. The term "*remove*" does not include the process of clearing such collection of any materials that are no longer useful.

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- “*School library staff member*” means a school library media specialist, school librarian, any certificated or noncertificated staff member whose assignment is in the school library, or any individual carrying out or assisting with the functions of a school library media specialist or school librarian.

#### **II. Library Collection Development and Maintenance**

The Board recognizes that library and other educational material should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all students and should represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints in the collection as a whole.

The Board requires that students have access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate material and shall provide access to library and other educational material that is relevant to the research, independent reading interests, and educational needs of students based on a student’s age, development, or grade level. The Board also recognizes the importance of the school library media center as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by students.

The Board acknowledges that a school library media specialist is professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides students with access to the widest array of age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

The Board directs the Superintendent to establish a procedure by which a certified school library specialist will continually review library and other educational material within a school library media center using professionally accepted standards, which shall include, but need not be limited to, the material’s relevance, the physical condition of the material, the availability of duplicates or copies of the material, the availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate material, and continued demand for the material (the “Library Review Procedure”). The Library Review Procedure is attached hereto as Appendix A.

#### **III. Library Displays and Programs**

The Board recognizes that displays should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all students; represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints; require student access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate content; and provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of students.

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The Board further recognizes the importance of library displays and student programs as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by students.

The Board acknowledges that a school library media specialist is professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs that provide students with access to the widest array of age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

#### **IV. Library Material Review and Reconsideration**

The purpose of this policy section regarding library material review and reconsideration is to establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to challenge any District library and other educational material, display, or student program, as well as a process for the District to respond to any such challenges and related parameters.

##### ***A. Standards for Reviewing Challenges to Library and Other Educational Material, Display, or Student Program***

1. All library materials shall be evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Connecticut law, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. Library and other educational material, displays, and student programs shall only be excluded for legitimate pedagogical purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices, as adopted in this policy and/or any accompanying procedure for the continual review of library and educational material within a school library.
3. No library and other educational material, display, or program shall be removed from library media centers, or programs be cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display, or program, or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display, or program.
4. The removal, exclusion, or censoring of any book on the sole basis that a person with a vested interest finds such book offensive is prohibited.

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5. Any process for an individual with a vested interest to challenge any library and other educational material, display, or student program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics.

***B. Process for Challenging Library and Other Educational Material, Display, or Student Program***

The Board establishes the following process for individuals with a vested interest to challenge any library and other educational material, display, or student program, as well as a process for the District to respond to any such challenges:

1. An individual with a vested interest may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form (the "Request Form") to the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material, display, or student program is being challenged to initiate a review of such material. The Request Form is attached hereto as Appendix B.

Using the Request Form, an individual shall specify which portion or portions of such material the individual objects to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection. The individual submitting the Request Form must include the individual's full legal name, address, and telephone number. If the individual who has submitted a Request Form is a parent or guardian, consideration of requests to reconsider and remove material, displays, or student programs shall be limited to the parents and guardians of students and eligible students currently enrolled in the school or District.

2. Upon receipt, the principal or the principal's designee shall promptly forward the Request Form to the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee.
3. The administration may consolidate any requests for review and reconsideration of the same challenged library and other educational material.
4. For each challenged library and other educational material, the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, shall appoint a Review Committee consisting of:
  - a. the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee;
  - b. the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material is being challenged, or the principal's designee;
  - c. the director of curriculum, or a person in an equivalent position, employed by the Board;
  - d. a representative from the Board;

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- e. at least one grade-level-appropriate teacher familiar with the library material, provided the teacher selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form;
- f. a parent or guardian of a student age thirteen years or younger enrolled in the District, provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form;
- g. a parent or guardian of a student age fourteen years or older enrolled in the District, provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form; and
- h. a certified school librarian employed by the Board or employed by another board of education in the state.

In cases where the request is submitted by a student enrolled in grades nine through twelve, and when appropriate and at the discretion of the Superintendent, a student enrolled in grades nine through twelve may serve on the Review Committee, provided the student selected is not the individual who submitted the Request for Reconsideration and the Superintendent consults with the principal of the school involved in such reconsideration request prior to making the determination whether to include the student on the Review Committee.

- 5. Any library and other educational material being challenged shall remain available in the school library media center according to such material's catalog record and be available for a student to reserve, check out, or access until a final decision is made by the Review Committee.
- 6. The Review Committee must evaluate the Request Form; read the challenged material in its entirety; evaluate the challenged material against this policy; and make a written decision on whether or not to remove the challenged material not later than sixty (60) school days from the date the Request Form was received by the principal or the principal's designee. The Review Committee shall provide a copy of the committee's decision and report to the individual with a vested interest who submitted the Request Form and to the principal of the school.
- 7. The individual with a vested interest who submitted the Request Form may appeal the Review Committee's decision to the Board. The Board shall determine whether the reconsideration process was followed and publish its decision on the Internet web site of the District.

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8. Once a decision has been made by the Review Committee on any library and other educational material, such material cannot be subject to a new request for review and reconsideration for a period of three (3) years.

Legal References:

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15c

Public Act No. 25-168, "An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2027, and Making Appropriations Therefor, and Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget."

Policy revised:  
Policy revised: April 9, 2019  
Policy adopted: June 14, 2005

HAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Hamden, Connecticut

Appendix A to Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs,  
and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

**LIBRARY REVIEW PROCEDURE**

Library materials shall be evaluated consistently and systematically to insure they meet high standards and comply with Connecticut General Statutes and Hamden Board of Education policy and regulations.

The Board of Education, though it has final responsibility for all purchases, recognizes the student's right to free access to many types and formats of reading materials and library resources, including digital content. The Board also recognizes the right of library media specialists to select resources in accordance with curricular needs and to make such materials available in the libraries.

It is the responsibility of the school district to provide a wide range of materials of various levels of difficulty and representing a variety of student interests. Library materials purchased for students should be appropriate for the age, emotional development, maturity, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected. Materials should also represent differing points of view on controversial issues to afford students the opportunity to develop the necessary critical thinking skills to become discriminate users of information and productive members of society.

Library materials will be selected for their ability to instill in each child a sense of pride in the student's individuality and provide insight into the experiences and identities of others. Materials should provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including authors and illustrators of all cultures. Within the school district, different schools may have different student needs and interests. In addition to core materials each school provides to support the curriculum, each school may have different priorities when selecting its materials to meet student interests.

Library collections are housed in the school libraries and are available for all students and faculty of the school. Interlibrary loans are available upon special request. Databases are accessible through the school library web pages.

Resources for the school libraries are selected according to the following criteria:

1. Resources enrich and support the curricula and meet the needs of students and faculty.
2. Resources are high interest and available at all levels of difficulty.
3. Resources are provided in a variety of formats both print and non-print including, but not limited to, books, audiobooks, ebooks, magazines, and databases.
4. Resources present various sides of controversial issues, giving students an opportunity to develop analytical skills resulting in informed decisions; nonfiction supports the deepening of knowledge of the world.

5. Literature is selected to develop and strengthen a love of reading; all genres are represented, as are all maturity levels. A wide variety of topics of interest are selected with characters that reflect themselves and others.
6. Databases are selected to enhance learning about curricular topics and facilitate research with features that support all reading levels and non-English speakers.
7. Professional resources are selected to support pedagogy, current trends in education and the goals of Hamden Public Schools.

In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible prior to purchase.

Gifts and donations to the schools are accepted with the understanding that the decision for use and disposition of the materials will be determined using the same selection as purchased materials and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria. Like purchased resources, gifts and donations will be removed from the collection at the end of their useful life.

Collection development is an ongoing process where materials are not only purchased and added to the collection, but materials that are no longer used or needed are removed, and materials that continue to have educational value but are lost or worn are replaced. District resources will be reviewed on a regular and frequent basis for accuracy, currency, usage, diversity, condition, and redundancy. Media specialists will follow the deselection plan and schedule for removing materials from the library collections.

Regulation approved:

Appendix B to Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

**REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL**

This form may be used by an individual with a vested interest to challenge any library or other educational material, display, or student program in accordance with the Board's Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration policy. The form should be completed in its entirety and submitted to the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material is being challenged to initiate a review of such material.

Full Legal Name of Person Submitting Request:

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*Please note that the process for challenging any library and other educational material, display, or student program is available only to the following "individuals with a vested interest" as defined in the Board's Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration policy:*

- *any school staff member employed by the Board ("Staff Member"),*
- *the parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed ("Parent/Guardian"), and*
- *any student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed ("Student").*

Referring to the definitions immediately above, please indicate your role by checking any or all of the following that apply. I am a:

Staff Member       Parent/Guardian       Student

Address:

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Telephone Number:

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Email Address:

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I have read the Board's Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy: (check one)

Yes  
 No

I am requesting that the following library material(s), display(s), and/or student program(s) be reviewed:

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I am requesting that this material be reviewed because I object to: (check one)

The entire material

A specific portion or portions of the material (identify portion(s) below)

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I provide the following explanation of the reasons for my objection(s) stated above:

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_