SELECTION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The Board recognizes that the primary objective of educational materials is to implement, extend and enrich the curriculum and education programs of the schools. Educational materials are important to prepare students to meet the content standards of the Learning Results, to achieve the school unit's educational goals, and to provide enrichment opportunities that expand students' interests and encourage life-long learning. The Board seeks to provide a wide range of educational materials at all levels of difficulty, with diverse appeal and representing various points of view.

Each school shall maintain a library-media program that includes books and other print materials, multimedia materials, online Internet resources and information technology that support the curriculum. A certified library-media specialist will be responsible for overseeing the school system's library-media program, under the supervision of the Superintendent.

Responsibility for Selection of Materials
The Superintendent, in consultation with administrators and professional staff, is responsible for selecting instructional materials and library-media materials to implement the Learning Results and support the curriculum. This includes textbooks, books, print materials, software, online resource materials, multimedia materials and information technology. Certified library-media specialists are responsible for overseeing the library-media program under the supervision of the Superintendent.

The Superintendent is responsible for developing any administrative procedures necessary to guide the review and selection of educational materials, and may delegate specific responsibilities to staff as deemed appropriate. All administrative procedures must be consistent with this policy. The Superintendent is expected to keep the Board generally informed about educational materials purchased for the school unit.

Criteria for Selection
Quality educational materials and resources are essential to student learning and supporting the school unit's educational goals and objectives.

Selection criteria that should be considered include:

A. Support student achievement of the content standards of the system of Learning Results;

B. Support the goals and objectives of the school system's educational programs;

C. Enrich and support the curriculum;

D. Take into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served;

E. Foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinions and enhance students' capacity for critical analysis;

F. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, ethical standards, and critical analysis;

G. Provide a balanced representation of the contributions of diverse groups and individuals to our American and global heritage;

H. Provide information that will enable students to make informed decisions in their daily lives;

I. Be accurate and current;

J. Reflect high quality scholarship and presentation;

K. Represent significant authors/composers and works from diverse groups;

L. Be accessible by individuals with disabilities; and

M. Be affordable.

It is not expected that selected materials will address all criteria listed above. The criteria are guidelines to be considered, not specific requirements.

Selection Procedure

The highest priority shall be meeting the instructional needs of the individual schools. In meeting this priority, preference shall be given to basic learning materials, i.e., those that are the predominant instructional materials used at particular grade levels or courses and/or are essential to student achievement of Learning Results content standards and school unit expectations.

Before selecting/recommending materials for purchase, professional staff should evaluate the existing collection, consult with staff from appropriate departments and/or grade levels, personally review the material whenever possible, and obtain recommendations/reviews regarding the material from appropriate reputable sources.

Multiple copies of materials should be purchased as needed and within budgetary constraints. Worn or missing materials should be replaced as needed. Outdated materials or materials that are no longer in demand should be withdrawn from the collection and/or circulation.

Donated Materials

Gift materials are judged by the same criteria as materials selected by the school staff and in accordance with Board policy on gifts and donations.

Inspection of Materials by Parents and Opt-Out Requests

A student's parent/guardian may inspect, upon request, any instructional or library-media material used as part of the curriculum. Such requests shall be made to the appropriate teacher or the library-media specialist. Access to the materials shall be provided within a reasonable time after such a request is made. The Superintendent may develop any administrative procedures necessary to implement this process.

If a parent/guardian wishes to restrict their child's access to particular instructional materials, the procedure in Board Policy IMBB shall be followed.

Challenged Materials Procedure

This procedure applies only to requests to restrict access to or remove materials from the school's collection or curriculum. Individual exemption requests are subject to Board policy IMBB as described in Section E. In the event that a student, parent/guardian, staff or community member has a concern regarding particular materials, or requests to restrict access to or remove particular materials from the curriculum or library collection, the following procedure will be followed. No changes in access to, or removal of, educational materials will be made until the procedure is completed.

A. The complainant must discuss their concern first with the person providing the material in question. Individual staff members may discuss concerns, but do not have the authority to restrict access to or remove materials from the curriculum or library collection.

B. If the complainant is not satisfied, they shall be referred to the building administrator, who shall provide a copy of this policy and request the complainant complete the Citizen's Challenge of Educational Media" form. A copy of the form will be forwarded to the Superintendent.

C. The Superintendent shall appoint a committee composed of the following persons to review the complaint: one administrator; one librarian-media specialist; one classroom teacher; the curriculum leader/grade level leader/department head in the subject area of the challenged materials; and one community member. The review committee meeting will only include members of the committee.

D. The review committee shall read and examine the materials referred to them; check general acceptance of materials by reading a range of reviews (if applicable); and weigh the value of the material in light of this policy and the school unit's educational mission and programs. Committee members are expected to form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages or portions pulled out of context. The Committee should generally be neutral toward viewpoints expressed in materials, and shall ask the Superintendent to consult legal counsel for advice concerning any questions involving freedom of speech or expression. The committee shall meet to discuss the material and prepare a written report with their recommendation. The committee may recommend to make no changes in access to the material; to restrict or relocate the material; to substitute the use of different educational material in place of the

material under review; or to remove the material from the school unit's curriculum or collection.

E. The committee shall provide the report to the Superintendent, who will inform the complainant of the committee's recommendation in writing. If there is no appeal of the recommendation, the recommendation will be implemented.

F. Either the Superintendent or the complainant may appeal the committee's recommendation to the Board. An appeal must be made in writing within ten (10) business days and must specify the reasons for disagreement with the committee's recommendation. The Board may set aside a portion of a regular meeting or call a special meeting to review the complaint and the committee report, and to receive testimony from representatives of the various points of view who are members of the community served by the school unit. The material in question shall be:

1. Reviewed objectively and in its full content;

2. Evaluated in terms of the needs and interest of students, school, curriculum and community;

3. Considered in the light of differing opinions; and

4. Reviewed in light of the criteria set forth in this policy, and the school unit's educational mission and program.

The Board will announce its decision in writing not later than the conclusion of the next regular meeting of the Board.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA §§ 1001 (10-A); 1055 (4); 4002
Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 125
20 U.S.C. § 1232h

Cross Reference: IJJ-E – Citizen's Challenge of Educational Media Form
IMB - Teaching about Controversial Issues
IMBB - Exemption from Required Instruction

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