Karnes City I. S. D. Library Media Program

Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Policy

The District shall provide a wide range of instructional resources for students and faculty that present varying levels of difficulty, diversity of appeal, and a variety of points of view. Although trained professional staff are afforded the freedom to select instructional resources for their use in accordance with this policy and the state-mandated curriculum, the ultimate authority for determining and approving the curriculum and instructional program of the District lies with the Board.

Reconsideration Forms will be distributed and received by the Superintendent's office.

Objectives

In this policy, "instructional resources" refers to textbooks, library acquisitions, supplemental materials for classroom use, and any other materials, including electronic resources, used for formal or informal teaching and learning purposes. The primary objectives of instructional resources are to deliver, support, enrich, and assist in implementing the District's educational program. [See EFAA for selection and adoption of state-adopted textbooks]

The Board shall rely on District professional staff to select and acquire instructional resources that:

1. Enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration students' varied interests, abilities, learning styles, and maturity levels.

2. Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, enjoyment of reading, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and societal standards.

3. Present various sides of controversial issues so that students have an opportunity to develop, under guidance, skills in critical analysis and in making informed judgments in their daily lives.

4. Represent many ethnic, religious, and cultural groups and their contributions to the national heritage and world community.

5. Provide a wide range of background information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.

Criteria

In the selection of instructional resources other than textbooks, especially library acquisitions and supplemental materials for classroom use, professional staff shall ensure that materials:

1. Support and are consistent with the general educational goals of the state and District and the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses consistent with the District and campus improvement plans.

2. Meet high standards in presentation, format, readability, content, accuracy, artistic or literary quality, and educational significance.

3. Are appropriate for the subject and for the age, ability level, learning styles, and social and emotional development of the students for whom they are selected.

4. Are designed to provide information that will motivate students to examine their own attitudes and behavior, to understand their rights, duties, and responsibilities as citizens, and to make informed judgments in their daily lives.

Recommendations for library acquisitions shall involve administrators, teachers, other District personnel, and community representatives, as appropriate. Gifts of instructional resources shall be evaluated according to these criteria and accepted or rejected accordingly.

Selection of materials is an ongoing process that includes the removal of resources no longer appropriate and the periodic replacement or repair of materials still of educational value.

Controversial Issues

The selection of library acquisitions on controversial issues shall endeavor to maintain a balanced collection representing various views. Library materials shall be chosen to clarify historical and contemporary forces by presenting and analyzing intergroup tension and conflict objectively, placing emphasis on recognizing and understanding social and economic problems. [See also EMB regarding instruction about controversial issues and EHAA regarding human sexuality instruction.]

Challenged Materials

A parent of a District student, any employee, or any District resident may formally challenge an instructional resource used in the District's educational program on the basis of appropriateness.

Informal Reconsideration

The school receiving a complaint about the appropriateness of an instructional resource shall try to resolve the matter informally using the following procedure:

1. The principal or other knowledgeable professional staff shall explain the school's selection process, the criteria for selection, and the qualifications of the professional staff who selected the questioned material.

2. The principal or other knowledgeable professional staff shall explain the role the questioned material plays in the educational program, its intended educational usefulness, and any additional information regarding its use.

3. If appropriate, the principal may offer a concerned parent another resource to be used by that parent's child in place of the challenged material.

4. If the complainant wishes to make a formal challenge, the principal shall provide the complainant a copy of this policy and a Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form [see Appendix F].

Formal Reconsideration

All formal objections to instructional resources shall be made on the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form. The form shall be completed and signed by the complainant and submitted to the principal or designee. Upon receipt of the request, the principal shall appoint a reconsideration committee.

The reconsideration committee shall include at least one member of the instructional staff who either has experience teaching the challenged material or is familiar with the challenged material. Other members of the committee may include District-level staff, library staff, secondary-level students, parents, and others deemed appropriate by the principal.

All members of the committee shall review the challenged material in its entirety. As soon as reasonably possible, the committee shall meet and determine whether the challenged material conforms to the principles of selection set out in this policy. The committee shall then prepare a written report. Copies of the report shall be provided to the principal, the Superintendent or designee, and the complainant.

Appeal

The complainant may appeal the decision of the reconsideration committee in accordance with appropriate complaint policies, starting at Level Two. The appeal shall contain a copy of the original complaint, the reconsideration committee's report, and

dates of conferences with the principal or designee.

Guiding Principles

The following principles shall guide the Board and staff in responding to challenges of instructional resources:

1. A parent of a District student, any employee, or any District resident may raise an objection to an instructional resource used in a school's educational program, despite the fact that the professional staff selecting the resources were qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure, and adhered to the objectives and criteria for instructional resources set out in this policy.

2. A parent's ability to exercise control over reading, listening, or viewing matter extends only to his or her own children.

3. When instructional resources are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view must be defended as well.

4. Access to challenged material shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.

The major criterion for the final decision on challenged materials is the appropriateness of the material for its intended educational use. No challenged library material shall be removed solely because of the ideas expressed therein.

SOURCE: Karnes City Independent School Board Policy, accessed online, June 2010.