606.5 LIBRARY MATERIALS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and to delegate responsibility for selection and reconsideration of library materials.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The school board recognizes that library materials serve as a vital component of a student's education by enriching the breadth of the curriculum as a whole and meeting the needs and interests of individual students. The purpose of library materials is to meet the needs of all students. Therefore, questions regarding selection and reconsideration of library materials should be handled differently than those concerning textbooks and instructional materials.

To ensure that library materials fulfill this role, the school board delegates to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee responsibility for administering a process for selection of library materials. Responsibility for selection shall rest with professionally trained school district staff, with recognition that the school board has the final authority on selection of library materials. Parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's access to library materials.

School district 743 supports the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the American Library Association. When library materials are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read/listen/view must be defended as well.

[NOTE: The school board may choose to revise the General Statement of Purpose.]

III. DEFINITIONS

A. "Library" is the school district resource that holds the library collection that serves the information and independent reading needs of students and supports the curriculum needs of teachers and staff. The term "library" includes a school library media center. The term also includes access to electronic materials; however, this policy does not govern access to electronic materials that are accessed through the internet.

For school districts with multiple school buildings, the term "library" refers to the resource within a specific school building.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.991, states that a school district or charter school library or school library media center provides equitable and free access to students, teachers, and administrators and that a school library or school library media center must have the following characteristics:

1. ensures every student has equitable access to resources and is able to

locate, access, and use resources that are organized and cataloged;

2. has a collection development plan that includes but is not limited to materials selection and deselection, a challenged materials procedure, and an intellectual and academic freedom statement;

3. is housed in a central location that provides an environment for expanded learning and supports a variety of student interests;

4. has technology and Internet access; and

5. is served by a licensed school library media specialist or licensed school librarian.

[NOTE: The school board may add a sentence that incorporates the term(s) used to identify libraries in the school district, such as "The school district's libraries are commonly referred to as _____.]

B. "Library collection" consists of the library materials made available to students.

C. "Library materials" are the books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, prints, documents, videotapes, subscription content, electronic and digital materials (including e-books, audiobooks, and databases), and related items made available to students in a school building or through access to electronic materials This term does not include materials made available to students as part of the curriculum.

D. "Media specialist" is a teacher holding a Library Media Specialist teaching license issued by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Boards and who is trained to deliver library services to students and staff in a library. A library media specialist is authorized under Minnesota Rules to provide to students in kindergarten through grade 12 instruction that is designed to provide information and technology literacy skills instruction, to lead, collaborate, and consult with other classroom teachers for the purpose of integrating information and technology literacy skills with content teaching, and to administer media center operations, programming, and resources.

[NOTE: The specific titles of the school district's library staff should be used for this definition and substituted for "library media specialist" throughout this model policy. Please note the new 2024 law in Article IV regarding administration of selection and reconsideration procedures.]

IV. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

A. The school board recognizes the expertise of the school district's professional staff and the vital need of such staff to be responsible for selection of library materials.

B. While recommendations by administrators, faculty members, students, parents or guardians, and other community members may be considered, the final responsibility for selection of library materials shall rest with the library media specialist.

C. The procedures for selection and reconsideration set forth in this policy will be

administered by:

1. a licensed library media specialist under Minnesota Rules, part 8710.4550;

2. an individual with a master's degree in library science or library and information science; or

3. a professional librarian or a person trained in library collection management.

D. The school board may decline to purchase, lend, or shelve or remove access to library materials legitimately based on:

1. practical reasons, including but not limited to shelf space limitations, rare or antiquarian status, damage, or obsolescence;

2. legitimate pedagogical concerns, including but not limited to the appropriateness of potentially sensitive topics for the library's intended audience, the selection of library materials for a curated collection, or the likelihood of causing a material and substantial disruption of the work and discipline of the school; or

3. compliance with state or federal law.

[NOTE: In 2024, the Minnesota legislature enacted a new law—Minnesota Statutes 134.51--that includes the new provisions above.]

V. SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

A. Selection Criteria: The library materials selection process should result in a library collection that, when considered as a whole, is consistent with the following criteria:

1. Library materials shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the state and the district and the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses;

2. Library materials shall be chosen to enrich and support the curriculum as well as to promote reading for pleasure by responding to the personal needs and interests of student users;

3. Library materials shall not be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, sex, gender, or political views of the writer;

4. Library materials shall be appropriate to and reflect the needs, ages, maturity level, emotional development, ability levels, learning styles, social development, background, diversity, and needs and interests of the students for whom the materials were selected;

5. Library materials shall meet high standards of quality in one or more of these categories (presented alphabetically):

   a. Artistic quality and/or literary style;

   b. Authenticity;

   c. Critical thinking;

   d. Educational significance;

   e. Factual content;

   f. High interest for intended audience; and

   g. Readability.

6. The selection of library materials shall conform to the constraints of the school district budget.

7. The library materials selection process shall place a high priority on the principles of intellectual freedom: The District believes in helping preserve American Freedoms, particularly the principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. These beliefs require a sincere effort to generate understanding of these freedoms through the development of better-informed and more responsible citizens. To facilitate this understanding, the School Board provides resources to meet the educational needs of all students and staff. Therefore, in selecting a varied and stimulating collection of quality resource material, principles must be placed above personal opinion and reason above prejudice.

[NOTE: Before adopting selection criteria, the school board is strongly encouraged to consult with the licensed library media specialist, who possesses professional expertise and experience in selecting appropriate library materials. The school board may choose to adopt selection criteria specifically designed for each school building.]

[NOTE: A school board may choose to adopt similar selection criteria for classroom library materials, with the classroom teacher making selection decisions. If a school board chooses to address classroom libraries, the board can decide whether to follow the reconsideration process in this model policy or to create a different process for classroom library materials.]

B. The library media specialist shall consult sources and specialists experienced in library materials collections appropriate for the building's students and that are reputable, experienced, unbiased, and professionally trained in school library materials.

[NOTE: The school board may choose to identify specific sources and specialists that satisfy this paragraph.]

C. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall be responsible for keeping the school board informed of progress on review and selection of each building's library materials.

D. Library materials that are outdated, inaccurate, no longer useful for curricular support or reading enrichment, or have not been utilized for an extended period of time may be removed. Library materials that are in poor physical condition may be removed or replaced as determined by the library media specialist or the principal.

E. Gifts and Donations of Library Materials.

Materials offered for donation or gifted to a school library may be accepted if they comply with the library collection selection criteria and approved by the library media specialist. The school district's libraries welcome donations of books and other resource materials from individuals and organizations, but also reserve the right to decline to accept library materials that do not meet the criteria for selection. In addition, financial donations to benefit school district's libraries will be accepted with the understanding that funds will be used to purchase materials that are needed for libraries based on the needs of the individual schools library and facilitated by the library media specialist.

VI. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ACCESS TO SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL

Parents and guardians are responsible for speaking with their student about the library materials they choose to access for independent reading. A parent or guardian may request that access to specific material in the library materials collection be restricted from their student by directly contacting the teacher, media specialist, and/or school principal. All requests submitted to the teacher and/or school principal will be shared with the media specialist. The school shall take reasonable steps to fulfill this request. This type of request will not result in removal of specific library collection material from the library or restrictions upon any other student accessing specific library materials.

VII. RECONSIDERATION OF SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL

A. The school board seeks to uphold students' access to library materials that meet the educational goals and selection criteria set forth in this policy.

B. A school district employee, student, or a parent or guardian of a school district student may request reconsideration of specific library material on the basis of appropriateness. Access to the material in question shall not be restricted until the procedures listed below have been fully completed and a decision to remove or restrict the materials has been made.

[NOTE: The school board may decide whether to allow a building principal to remove library materials pending completion of the reconsideration process.]

C. Informal Request for Reconsideration of Specific Library Material

1. Requests for reconsideration of specific library material shall be directed to the library media specialist and the building principal. The building principal and the library media specialist shall assume responsibility for processing the request on an informal basis.

2. The building principal and/or the library media specialist shall provide an explanation to the individual who submitted the request. The explanation shall include the particular selection criteria that the material in question met in order to be included in the library as curriculum support or as an independent reading choice for students in the building.

3. If the request is not resolved informally, the principal shall submit a report on the matter to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee. The requestor will have an option to initiate a Formal Request for Reconsideration.

D. Formal Request for Reconsideration of Specific Library Collection Material

1. A Formal Request for Reconsideration of specific library material is initiated upon submission of a completed *Formal Request for Reconsideration of Specific Library Collection Material* form. The form must be completed in its entirety for each work that is subject to a request for reconsideration. The principal shall notify the superintendent or the superintendent's designee and the library media specialist of receipt of a completed Formal Request form. The superintendent will not process the request if the form is not completed in its entirety.

   The district will acknowledge receipt of a Formal Request for Reconsideration within 30 school contract days. One challenge will be addressed at a time. An individual person may challenge only one book per school year.

   If specific library material is the subject of a Formal Request for Reconsideration and a final decision is made to retain the specific library material, then the specific library material shall not be subject to additional requests for reconsideration for three years following the date of final resolution of the initial Formal Request for Reconsideration.

2. On an annual basis, the Superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall appoint a Library Materials Review Committee (Review Committee).

   This committee shall include:

   a. One member of the school district administration

   b. One principal

c. Two teachers

d. One library media specialist (or district media specialist or public librarian if the school district does not have a library media specialist)

e. Two members of the school district community with no direct connection with the request for reconsideration (one must be a parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in the District)

f. Two student representatives (as appropriate to the specific request).

g. Any other person(s) who, in the view of the Superintendent, would be helpful in considering the objection, applying the review criteria, and evaluating whether the specific library material should be removed.

[NOTE: This list of Review Committee members is an example. The school board may alter this list. The school district may decide to create Review Committees for individual schools.]

3. The Review Committee shall establish a date upon which it will discuss the request and whether the specific library collection material conforms to the selection criteria set forth in this policy.

4. The Review Committee

   a. may consult individuals, organizations, and other resources with relevant professional knowledge on school library material;

   b. shall examine the specific library material as a whole;

   c. shall examine the specific library material as to its conformance with the criteria for selection of library materials; and

   d. shall submit a written report to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee containing the Review Committee's decision on whether to retain, to remove, or to take other action regarding the specific library material.

5. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall inform the requestor and the school board of the Review Committee's decision. The requestor may appeal the Review Committee's decision to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee by submitting a written appeal to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee within fourteen (14) days of submission of the Review Committee's decision to the requestor. The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall

provide a written decision on a requestor's appeal within a reasonable time period.

[NOTE: The school board can decide whether to allow appeal of a Review Committee decision to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee. If appeal to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee is permitted, the school board may direct the superintendent or the superintendent's designee to craft an appeal process or the board may choose to create the process itself.]

6. The requestor shall have the right to appeal the decision of the superintendent or the superintendent's designee to the school board.

[NOTE: The school board may decide whether to allow an appeal of a Review Committee decision directly to the school board or whether the appeal to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee is a required intermediary step. If appeal to the school board is permitted, the school board may direct the superintendent or the superintendent's designee or designee to craft an appeal process or the board may choose to create the process itself.]

VIII. CHALLENGE REPORT

Upon the completion of a content challenge or reconsideration process in accordance with this policy, the school board must submit a report of the challenge to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education that includes:

A. the title, author, and other relevant identifying information about the material being challenged;

B. the date, time, and location of any public hearing held on the challenge in question, including minutes or transcripts (NOTE: this policy does not require or provide for a public hearing);

C. the result of the challenge or reconsideration request; and

D. accurate and timely information on who from the school district the Department of Education may contact with questions or follow-up.

[NOTE: This article was enacted in 2024 by the Minnesota legislature.]

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE REMOVAL

This policy does not prohibit a library media specialist or other administrator from removing specific library material because: it has not been utilized by any student for an extended period of time or has been utilized rarely; it is damaged or is in poor physical condition; or there are other similar reasons unrelated to content.

X. PROHIBITION ON RETALIATION

The school district may not discriminate against or discipline an employee for complying with Minnesota Statutes, section 134.51.

[NOTE: This article was enacted in 2024 by the Minnesota legislature.]

Legal References:
Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 9 (Compulsory Instruction)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.02 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (School Board Responsibilities)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.991 (Public School Libraries and Media Centers)
Minn. Stat. § 134.51 (Access to Library Materials and Rights Protected)
Minn. Rules Part 8710.4550 (Library Media Specialists)
Bd. of Educ., Island Trees Union Free Sch. Dist. No. 26 v. Pico, 457 U.S. 853 (1982)
Virginia State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624, 642 (1943)
Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 606 (Textbooks and Instructional Materials)

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