606 TEXTBOOKS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND LIBRARY MATERIALS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction for selection of textbooks, instructional materials and library materials.

Adopted with revisions from MSBA Policy 606, Orig. 1995, Rev. 2005 and from INB, INC, IIAA, IIAB, IIABA
Rev. 9/2011, 11/2022, 4/8/24, 7/22/24, 12/15/25

606 TEXTBOOKS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND LIBRARY MATERIALS

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The school board recognizes that instructional materials and library materials are a vital component of the school district's curriculum. The school board also recognizes that it has the authority to make final decisions on selection of all instructional materials and library materials.

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.

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.

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. For the purposes of this policy "library materials" shall have the same meaning as "instructional materials".

D. "Library 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.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY OF SELECTION

A. While the school board retains its authority to make final decisions on the selection of textbooks and instructional materials, the school board recognizes the expertise of the professional staff and the vital need of such staff to be primarily involved in the recommendation of textbooks and instructional materials. Accordingly, the school board delegates to the superintendent the responsibility to direct the professional staff in formulating recommendations to the school board on instructional materials.

B. The procedures for selection and reconsideration of library materials 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.

C. In reviewing textbooks and instructional materials during the selection process, the professional staff shall select materials that:

1. support the goals and objectives of the education programs;

2. 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. consider 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;

4. foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinion;

5. fit within the constraints of the school district budget;

6. are in the English language. Another language may be used, pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 124D.61;

7. permit grade-level instruction for students to read and study America's founding documents, including documents that contributed to the foundation or maintenance of America's representative form of limited government, the Bill of Rights, our free-market economic system, and patriotism; and

8. do not censor or restrain instruction in American or Minnesota state history or heritage based on religious references in original source documents, writings, speeches, proclamations, or records.

D. The superintendent or designee shall be responsible for developing procedures and guidelines to establish an orderly process for the review and recommendation of instructional materials by the professional staff. Such procedures and guidelines shall provide opportunity for input and consideration of the views of students, parents, and other interested members of the school district community. This procedure shall be coordinated with the school district's curriculum development effort and may utilize advisory committees.

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

V. SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

A. The superintendent or designee shall be responsible for keeping the school board informed of progress on the part of staff and others involved in the textbook and other instructional materials review and selection process.

B. The superintendent or designee shall present a recommendation to the school board on the selection of textbooks and other instructional materials after completion of the review process as outlined in this policy.

C. In order to provide a current, highly-usable collection of materials in our schools, staff shall provide for constant and continuing renewal of the collections, not only by the addition of up-to-date materials, but by the judicious elimination of materials which no longer meet district needs. 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. Materials that are in poor physical condition may be removed or replaced.

D. Gift materials will be evaluated and selected or rejected by the same standards

which apply to the acquisition of new materials. Gift materials offered for donation or gifted to a school may be accepted if they comply with the selection criteria identified in this policy. The school district welcomes donations of books and other resource materials from individuals and organizations, but also reserves the right to decline to accept 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.

E. Those selecting print or non-print materials should carefully and thoughtfully consider community mores and values. Learning need.not and should not be presented in vulgar and unacceptable language format. However a frank treatment of topics and/or inclusion of profanity should not automatically rule out material. It does necessitate a searching evaluation of literary merits or objectiveness of the material relative to truth and curriculum objectives. Suitability to the age level must always be considered.

F. The teacher shall exercise careful consideration in determining whether the instructional material is controversial and warrants notification to parents. If so, the teacher must complete Addendum #1 for approval by the principal. Once Addendum #1 is approved, the teacher must notify parents/guardians about the controversial material and time of presentation to the students.

G. The superintendent or designee shall provide for an annual review of library materials.

H. The school board may decline to purchase, lend, 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.

VI. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ACCESS TO SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL

A parent or guardian may request that access to specific material in the library materials collection be restricted from their student. 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. TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

A. Controversial issues are defined as those problems, subjects or questions about which there are major differences of opinion, for which there are no easy answers, and discussion of which generally create strong feelings among people.

B. Controversial issues, however, provide stimulation to learning by creating intellectual excitement and are, thus, an important part of the classroom environment. Free inquiry in a democratic society requires that controversial issues arising in the classroom be handled as a regular aspect of instruction and learning in such a way as to not inhibit the dignity, the personality, or the intellectual integrity of either the teacher or the students.

C. The handling of a controversial issue in school shall be free from the assumption that there is one correct answer which shall emerge from the discussion and be taught authoritatively to the student.

D. Indoctrination shall not be the purpose; rather, the purpose shall be to have the student see as fully as possible all sides of the question.

E. The decision about whether a controversial issue shall become a matter for school study shall be based on such considerations as the timeliness of the question, the maturity of the students, the needs of the students and the purpose of the school.

F. No individual or group may claim the right to present arguments directly to students in school. Such a "right" will make the schools a battle ground for dozens of kinds of controversial issues. Citizens have the right to know that controversial issues are being presented fairly and to protest to the Board if convinced that they are not.

G. Subject areas of content material shall be taught in accordance with the requirements of the state statutes.

H. It is the district’s intention to:

1. Provide opportunities to study controversial issues without advocating for a position that’s controversial;
2. Deal with controversial topics as impartially and objectively as possible;
3. Handle all such topics in a manner suited to the range of knowledge, maturity and competence of the students;

4. Have teaching materials readily available dealing with all possible aspects of the topics;
5. Take up only issues that are current and real;
6. Find up-to-date teaching materials in the current press, periodical literature and other high quality sources.
7. Not expect or require that the class reach an agreement.

VIII. RECONSIDERATION INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

A. The school board recognizes differences of opinion on the part of some members of the school district community relating to certain areas of the instruction program. Interested persons may request an opportunity to review materials and submit a request for reconsideration of the use of certain textbooks or instructional materials.

B. The superintendent or designee shall be responsible for the development of guidelines and procedures to identify the steps to be followed to seek reconsideration of instructional materials.

C. The superintendent shall present a procedure to the school board for review and approval regarding reconsideration of textbooks or other instructional materials. When approved by the school board, such procedure shall be an addendum to this policy. (See Addendum #1)

D. All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material, which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any applicable program, shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the students.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 9 (Compulsory Instruction – Knowledge and Skills)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.235 (American Heritage Education)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 2 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.09, Subd. 8 (School Board Responsibilities)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.59-124D.61 (Education for English Learners Act)
Minn. Stat. § 127A.10 (State Officials and School Board Members to be Disinterested; Penalty)
20 U.S.C. 1232h(a) (Protection of Pupil Rights)
Hazelwood Sch. Dist. v. Kuhlmeier, 484 U.S. 260 (1988)
Pratt v. Independent Sch. Dist. No. 831, 670 F.2d 771 (8th Cir. 1982)

Cross References: Policy 603 (Curriculum Development)
Policy 604 (Instructional Curriculum)
MSBA Model Policy 606.5 Library Materials

Addendum #1

Grand Rapids Area Schools
Process for Reconsideration of Textbooks or Other Instructional Materials

Should a reconsideration request be made, the following procedure will be followed:

a. Invite the citizen (s) to submit his/her request in writing to the building principal completing the form "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials." (See Addendum #3) The citizen (s) is to be as specific as possible when completing the form;

b. Upon receipt of the reconsideration request, the building principal will inform the superintendent or designee and staff member(s) involved within five (5) working days;

c. Within five (5) working days, the staff member (s) involved will complete and submit the form "Faculty Member's Statement on Challenged Instructional Materials" to the building principal. (See Addendum #4)

d. The challenged material will be referred to the appropriate department for discussion. The department will render a decision in writing within five (5) working days concerning the material to the superintendent or designee.

e. The original copy of the reconsideration request and the staff member's statement will be filed with the building principal with copies provided to the superintendent or designee.

f. Within five (5) working days, a Reconsideration Committee will be selected or appointed by the building principal and superintendent or designee. The Reconsideration Committee chairperson will be the building principal of the building involved.

    1. The staff member (s) or individual (s) involved with the reconsidered material will not be member (s) of the committee.

    2. The committee will consist of:
        i. Building Principal (Chairperson)
        ii. Three community members, preferably from the World's Best Workforce committee
        iii. Two classroom teachers from the department or grade level involved
        iv. Superintendent or designee

g. The Reconsideration Committee will:

1. Review the challenged material using the guidance from Addendum #5;

2. Check general acceptance of the material by reading reviews;

3. Meet to discuss material and to prepare a report that includes the findings of fact, conclusions and determination.

4. The report will include one of the following recommendations:

    i. Material will be retained.

    ii. Material will not be required reading but will be available in the media center.

    iii. The material will be retained on a restricted basis and used only by appropriate students.

    iv. The material will be withdrawn from use.

5. The original report will be filed in the district office with copies to those involved with the material in question – building principal, staff member citizen(s);

h. Appeals of this decision must be made within five (5) working days to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent shall, within five (5) working days after receipt of the appeal, notify the citizen (s) of his/her decision in writing. Appeal to the Board of Education must be made in five (5) working days after receipt of the superintendent's decision. The decision of the School Board is final unless appealed to the court.

Reconsideration Committee will disband upon completion of case.

Addendum #2

Grand Rapids Area Schools
Instructional Resource Request

Teacher(s) _____ Date of Request _____

Curriculum Area _____

Learner outcome to be met: _____

_____

_____

Subject/Class: _____ Grade: _____

Name/Title of speaker or other resource: _____

_____

Instructional resource rating if available: _____

Agency/Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Date of use: _____

Description of subject or content of the resource: _____

_____

_____

Have you considered other options for addressing the same learner outcomes? _____

_____

How will you notify parents? _____

Principal comments (Principal may consult with department members or others.)

_____

_____

Approval: Yes _____ No _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approval for this resource is for the specific curriculum area and class stated above.

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Addendum #3

Grand Rapids Area Schools
Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Resources

Author or Producer: _____ Title: _____

Publisher: _____

Type of material: _____ Book _____ Film _____ Other

Request initiated by: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Location of material (school): _____

Citizen represents: _____ Self Other: _____

Identify other people (use back of form if necessary): _____

_____

Did you read or view the entire material? _____

Have you had an opportunity to become familiar with the judgement of professional evaluators concerning this material? _____

To what do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages passages, etc.) _____

_____

What do you feel might be the result of exposure to this material? _____

_____

In your opinion, is there anything good about this material? _____

_____

For what age group would you recommend this material? _____

_____

Other comments: _____

_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Addendum #4

Grand Rapids Area Schools
Faculty Member's Statement on Challenged Resources

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Is this work required reading, listening, or viewing in your classroom? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is your purpose in using this work in the classroom? _____

_____

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Addendum #5

Grand Rapids Area Schools
Guiding Questions for Review of Challenged Material

As a group, please consider the following questions as you make a team decision on whether the material presented should be reconsidered. Please use section V as you define controversial material.

1. Is the material that was used controversial? Specifically, how so?

2. Is there a way to use the current material and eliminate the controversial material?

3. Does the material address the state standard(s)?

4. Is there another way to address the standards more effectively without the controversial material? If so, how?

5. Does the curriculum support the goals and objectives of the educational program?

6. Is the material age appropriate?

7. Does the material foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinions?