

Book WSSD Policy Manual

Section 100 Programs

Title Resource Materials

Code 109

Status Active

Legal

1. 24 P.S. 801
2. 24 P.S. 803
3. 22 PA Code 4.13
4. Bd of Educ. v. Pico, 457 US 853 (1982)

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Purpose

The Board shall provide quality instructional materials to implement the District and school educational goals and objectives. The Board shall, by an affirmative vote of a majority of the full Board, provide resource materials that implement, support and enrich the educational program of district schools. The Superintendent shall be responsible for the recommendation of all resource materials. No adoption or change of materials shall be made without the Superintendent's recommendation, except by a two-thirds vote of the Board. [1][2][3]

The Board has significant discretion to set age-appropriate guidelines the district and the purpose of this policy is to outline the criteria for selection, acquisition, weeding, removal, reconsideration of school resource materials, and to outline parental rights in regards to the school resource materials. [4].

Definitions

Resource materials shall include digital resources, reference materials, other supplementary titles, all audiovisual materials, maps, library materials, and all other instructional materials.

Classic Art is defined as art from any culture that exhibits technical mastery; has demonstrated enduring value over generations; has had influence on art, literature, or society as a whole; has been widely studied by scholars and/or has been broadly recognized as an important and exemplary work.

Classic Literature is defined as books of high literary quality from any culture that have demonstrated enduring value over generations; have had influence on literature, art, or society as a whole; have been widely studied by scholars and/or have been broadly recognized as important and exemplary works.

Sex act is defined as sexual intercourse, masturbation, sadism, masochism, bestiality, fellatio, cunnilingus, sodomy, exhibition of genitals or nudity if such nudity is depicted for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification, or any touching of the sexual or other intimate parts.

ALTERNATE: Sex Act is defined as a physical act by one or more persons for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification.

Explicit Sexual Content is defined as written or visual depictions that contain detailed, graphic and/or extensive descriptions of Sex Acts and/or displays of nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification

Implied sex act is a depiction that implies that a sex act is about to occur, is occurring, or has just occurred.

Pervasive Vulgarity or Profanity is defined as content that: 1) depicts or describes: a) sexual or excretory organs; or b) constitutes irreverent, lewd or coarse language, including personally reviling epithets naturally tending to provoke violent resentment and language so grossly offensive to members of the public who actually hear it as to amount to a nuisance; 2) is pervasive (i.e., it dwells on or repeats the offensive content); and 3) is presented in terms that are patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards. Generally, material that dwells on or repeats offensive content is more likely to be pervasive than material where the offensive content is fleeting and isolated. Whether content is “patently offensive” shall depend, in part, on the full context in which the material appeared. It is recognized that the application of this standard necessarily involves the exercise of discretion and judgment. The phrase “contemporary community standards” is ultimately subject to determination by the Board.

Borderline Resource Materials, for the purposes of this policy, are materials that an administrator is unsure if a resource material meets the criteria of the age-appropriate guidelines below.

CIRA Committee is the Curriculum, Instruction, Resource, and Assessment Committee established by the Board.

PURCHASE, ACQUISITION AND SELECTION

Purchase and Acquisition

The legal responsibility for the purchase of all resource materials rests with the District, but the responsibility for the selection of materials is delegated to the Superintendent, after consultation with the administration, teaching staff and school librarians of the District.

Resource materials recommended by the superintendent require a majority vote of the board, otherwise resource materials can be approved by a two-thirds vote of the board as per Pennsylvania law [3]

Selection

The selection of resource materials is a collaborative, continuous process involving administrators, teachers, librarians, and students.

The selection of resource materials shall be made by teachers or librarians and submitted to the Superintendent, or designee provided the proposed resource materials support the Pennsylvania Standards and/or the Board approved planned courses of instruction. All resource materials must meet the age-appropriate guidelines established in this policy.

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent, or designee, to determine if the recommended resources contain age-appropriate material prior to district purchase.

Borderline Material:

When the superintendent/designee uses their professional judgement and determines the material is a borderline resource material, the material will be referred to the CIRA committee to make the determination. No more than ten (10) borderline resource materials may be submitted in one month without prior approval from the CIRA committee chair.

Any borderline materials, as defined in this policy, are to be forwarded to the CIRA committee at least fourteen (14) days before the next CIRA committee meeting.

If an educator or staff member is unsure about a resource material, then the resource material in question will go to the building administrator for their professional judgement. If the building administrator is unsure about a resource, then he or she is to submit the resource in question to the CIRA committee prior to purchase by the district.

The CIRA committee may take up to sixty (60) days to determine whether a borderline case will be recommended as a resource material. If a resource material is approved by the CIRA committee, then the recommendation will move forward for potential board approval.

Opportunity for Parental Review

The ultimate determination of appropriateness for a minor lies with the parent/guardian.

Resource materials planned for instructional use by teachers and aides shall be identified in weekly lesson plans.

Parents may contact the school librarian or teacher in writing to opt their student out of any particular resource material or content is not assigned to or checked out by their child. School librarians and teachers shall honor and accommodate individual such requests by parents/guardians, which may include restricting specific titles or books.

Objectives of Selection

Resource materials will reflect and support the District's educational goals and academic standards.

Resource materials will take into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served in each school.

Resource materials will be chosen to stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards. Materials will be chosen to represent diverse points of view on all topics.

Criteria for Selection of Resource Materials

The selection of resource materials shall be guided by the following criteria:

1. Purpose of the material.
2. Reputation and significance of the author.
3. Timeliness of the material. (Historical material will be evaluated within the context of when it was written or produced.)
4. Importance of subject matter to the collection and relationship to the objectives of coursework.
5. Authority in handling the subject.
6. Reputation and standards of the publisher.
7. Price.
8. Grade level readability and appeal of the material.
9. Quality of writing or production.
10. Quality of illustration.
11. Age appropriate to the grade levels of the students served.
12. Recommendations or requests from faculty, parents/guardians and students.
13. Varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served in each school.
14. Factual knowledge, literacy appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards
15. Critical acclaim through literary awards from highly recognized literary foundations (such as Pulitzer, Newberry, Caldecott, etc.).
16. Reflection of the diversity of the student and resident populations of the District including race, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religion, national origin and political beliefs.

Avoiding Educationally Unsuitable Material

Parents/guardians have a wide range of options outside of the district's system to introduce their child to content they deem appropriate for their child's age. As such, the district will prioritize inclusion of quality materials suitable for educational purposes that do not contain pervasive

vulgarity or profanity or explicit sexual content.

Resource materials shall be selected in accordance with the following age-appropriate guidelines. With the exception of material that would be illegal to provide to minors, the below standards apply only to school resource materials and do not prohibit materials from student possession.

Suggested

No resources materials shall be acquired that contain:

1. Pervasive vulgarity or profanity; or
2. Explicit sexual content, except (a) Classic Art; (b) Classic Literature; or (c) material serving pedagogical purposes, such as science or health instruction; or
3. Material that would be illegal to give to minors, as defined as harmful to minors as defined by law 18 Pa.C.S. 5903.

Additionally, no resource materials in elementary schools shall be acquired that contain:

1. References to sexual acts, except for the purposes of teaching students to avoid and report molestation; or
2. Visual depictions of nudity or that imply a person is not wearing clothing, particularly where private areas are strategically covered or not shown, but where such depictions draw the viewer's attention to the person's private areas.

OR (Bermuda Springs version)

1. No High School Library, nor any classroom library or curricular resource material in a High School, shall contain the following:

- a. Material that would be illegal to give to minors, as defined as harmful to minors as defined by law 18 Pa.C.S. 5903.
- b. Visual or visually implied depiction of sexual acts or simulations of sex acts.
- c. Explicit written descriptions of sex acts.
- d. Visual depictions of nudity – except for science and health instruction or classical works of art.

2. No Middle School Library, nor any classroom library or curricular resource material in a Middle School shall contain the following:

- a. Material that would be illegal to give to minors, such as defined as harmful to minors as defined by law 18 PA. CS-5903
- b. Visual or visually implied depiction of sexual acts or simulations of sex acts.
- c. Explicit written descriptions of sex acts.

- d. Visual depictions of nudity – except for anatomical diagrams for science and health instruction or classical works of art.

3. No Elementary School Library, nor any classroom library or curricular resource materials in an elementary school shall contain the following:

- a. Material that would be illegal to give to minors, such as harmful to minors as defined by law 18 PA. CS-5903.
- b. Visual or visually implied depiction of sexual acts or simulations of sex acts.
- c. Explicit written descriptions of sex acts.
- d. Non-explicit written references to sex acts except for the purposes of teaching students to avoid and report molestation.
- e. Visual depictions of nudity or depictions that imply a person is not wearing clothing/swimsuit, where private areas are strategically covered or not shown, but where such depictions are intended to draw the viewers' attention to the person's private areas.

Duplication

Need is the criteria for duplication of materials. Funds are spent primarily for different titles rather than for duplicate copies of the same title. However, when the need arises for duplicates, they are purchased in limited numbers and in paperback editions, if available.

Gifts

Gifts to libraries become the property of the School District upon receipt. Gift materials are judged by the same criteria as purchased materials. Librarians will use the same selection criteria to determine if gifts will be added to the library collection.

Controversial Subjects

It is recognized that there is a wide range of public opinion with regard to the following sensitive or controversial subjects. Therefore, more specific guidelines are established in these areas:

1. Alcohol, Drugs, Narcotics and Tobacco – Factual materials on these materials and the consequences of abuse will be included in resource materials. Sensationalized presentations will be avoided.
2. Ideologies – Factual materials dealing with various ideologies and philosophies can be selected for resource materials. It is understood that the inclusion of such material does not constitute an endorsement of the philosophy by the School District.
3. Ethnic Groups – Library collections should present the contributions made to our culture by all races and ethnic groups. Materials should be factual and unbiased. It is understood,

however, that some literary works which reflect an ethnic group's experience at a particular time in history may be included in resource materials.

4. Sex and Profanity – The appearance of a sexual incident or profanity should not automatically ban a book from the resource materials. Such material may only be included if it meets the above-described criteria.
5. Sexism – Materials which avoid the stereotyping of sex roles should be included in resource materials. Specifically, materials which explore non-traditional jobs for both sexes should be available for student use.

Implementing the Selection Policy

Librarians take a leadership role in communicating to administrators, teachers, and students the purpose and contents of the selection policy. It is expected that librarians will consult with administrators and teachers as well as students as they select materials for the school library. The curriculum shall be consulted by librarians as they coordinate purchases of materials to support the instructional program. The responsibility of coordinating the purchase supplemental materials for curricular use and for the leisure needs of students rests with the school librarian, subject to the approval of the Superintendent or designee.

Librarians shall physically examine materials whenever possible. In the absence of physically examining materials, librarian will use high quality, professional selection aids. A variety of formats shall be purchased to appeal to the wide variety of learning styles. Electronic resources shall be considered when possible to provide the least restrictive access to materials. The following are some of the selection aids that will be consulted when selecting resource materials:

1. Review Journals: School Library Journal, Booklist, Library Media Connection, Book Links, The Five Owls, VOYA, Teacher Librarian, Multimedia School, Computers in Libraries.
2. Core Collection Tools: Children's Catalog, Fiction Catalog, Middle & Junior High School Catalog, Senior High School Library Catalog.

PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERING CHALLENGED OR QUESTIONED MATERIALS

1. Only complaints in written form will be given consideration. Complainants shall utilize a district-developed form.
2. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the librarian shall notify the principal of the school involved, the library department head and the Assistant Superintendent.
3. The challenged material will be reviewed by the CIRA committee composed of the following personnel:
 - a. The librarian from the school involved.
 - b. One (1) teacher from the school involved.
 - c. One (1) teacher from a different school on the same level.

- d. One (1) member of the Parent Advisory Council from a different school on the same level.
 - e. The library department head who will act as chairperson but have no vote.
 - f. The principal of the school involved.
 - g. The principal will choose a teacher from the school involved to serve on the committee. The library department head will choose a teacher from a different school on the same level. The Assistant Superintendent will choose the representative from the Parent Advisory Council.
4. The library department head will provide all CIRA committee members with copies of the complaint, copies of the challenged material and professional reviews of the material (if available) for review and set a date for the committee to meet. The date for review shall be no later than four (4) weeks from receipt of the complaint.
 5. The CIRA committee will review the complaint and the challenged material and determine whether it conforms with the criteria set forth in this policy. The CIRA committee shall, by majority vote, make a recommendation.
 6. The library department head will make a written report giving the CIRA committee's recommendation to be sent to the Assistant Superintendent for review. Copies of this report will be sent to all CIRA committee members.
 7. The Assistant Superintendent will make a determination regarding the challenged material.
 8. A letter summarizing the action taken will be sent to the complainant by the Assistant Superintendent. The decision shall be in written form stating the basis for the decision, dated and provided to the complainant, the Board and all other appropriate staff members.
 9. The complainant may appeal the decision of the Assistant Superintendent to the Superintendent. The complainant shall have ten (10) days after receipt of the written decision regarding the resource materials to provide written notice of appeal to the Board President. The Superintendent shall review the request for Reconsideration and the challenged material and determine whether it conforms to the criteria set forth by this policy. When the decision has been reached, the Superintendent shall notify the complainant. The decision shall be in written form stating the basis for the decision, dated and provided to the complainant, the Board and all other appropriate staff members.
 10. The complainant may appeal the decision of the Superintendent to the Board. The complainant shall have ten (10) days after receipt of the written decision regarding the resource materials to provide written notice of appeal to the Board President. The Board, in consideration of the criteria set forth by this policy, by a majority vote, shall determine if the challenged resource materials shall remain in the District libraries or otherwise be available through the District or be removed. The Board shall inform the complainant in writing of its decision and its basis. The Board's decision shall be final.
 11. The challenged material shall not be removed until the challenge process has been completed.

12. Specific resource material that has withstood the formal challenge process after the adoption of this policy shall remain and will not be reconsidered with five (5) years of final determination. Any resource material removed will not be eligible for consideration to be added again for at least five (5) years and without meeting the criteria for selection outlined in this policy.

The Superintendent or designee may develop specific procedures consistent with this policy.

POOLED RESOURCES

Each of the West Shore School District school libraries (including the professional and curriculum libraries) is an integral component of the total District library program and is not an entity in and of itself. All instructional materials purchased by the District, regardless of whether or not they are housed in the library, are considered to be part of the library collection and should be cataloged. A record of each of these materials shall appear in the building library catalog.

Each library collection is considered a segment of the total District library collection. All materials are shared; all materials are made available upon request to any school library in the District. All requests for inter-library loans are to be made directly to the library which has the material or to the library department head. The department head will try to locate the requested materials and, if available, forward them directly to the librarian making the request.

INVENTORY

Each librarian shall conduct an annual inventory of a portion of the school library collection. This inventory cycle shall cover the entire library collection over a three-year period. Inventory is an essential part of collection development. Materials found missing in inventory shall be listed in the library catalog as "lost" and shall be removed from the library catalog in a timely manner. Items found missing in inventory must be noted on the annual report and year-end statistics.

WEEDING AND DISCARDING

Weeding the school library collection by withdrawing and discarding materials is as important in maintaining a useable library as is careful selection of new materials. The school library has an obligation to provide materials that are attractive and aesthetically pleasing. Electronic formats of materials should be purchased as well as print materials. Impressionable children form their attitudes about books from those with which they come in contact. If these are soiled, torn, heavily repaired with tape, they will not consider books valuable or delightful things of beauty which should be handled with respect. Children, especially at the elementary school level, are not sufficiently sophisticated enough to know that a book cannot be judged by appearance. The younger the child the more necessary that the books be appealing, as these children are not as yet using books as a means to an end in any great degree. Books which are in poor physical condition, which contain outdated subject content, or which are of doubtful literary quality should be removed from the collection.

The following checklist is recommended when considering books to be discarded.

Weeding Criteria

Weed these items:

1. Materials in such poor physical condition that the readers cannot use them or will receive the wrong idea about the care of materials.
2. Materials in which the print is too small for comfortable reading.
3. Materials whose leaves have become yellowed and brittle with age.
4. Materials which have been superseded by new or revised editions.
5. Materials which are not suitable for the readers using the collection.
6. History and science materials that are dated or inaccurate.
7. Duplicate copies of seldom used titles.
8. Materials which are so written or so illustrated that they are unattractive to the present generation of children.
9. Series books of mediocre quality which were popular one or more generations ago.

Weeding should be a continuous process, with each library having a comprehensive, written weeding plan that demonstrates a systematic review of the entire library collection over a period of years. When a print or multimedia material is too badly worn to be used it should be withdrawn from the collection and discarded. If the usefulness of the material warrants it, the discarded title should be re-ordered. It is poor economy to retain editions of required reading that lack eye-appeal; if an attractive, new edition is available, it should be bought and the unattractive edition discarded.

Discarding Procedures

1. Remove school library identification labels and stamps from the material.
2. Remove library security system tags.
3. Stamp the word "discard" on the end papers and on the title page of print materials. For media, stamp discard somewhere on the item or case.
4. Remove the MARC record for each weeded material from the library catalog.
5. Indicate on the bi-monthly and year-end reports the number of copies in each category withdrawn from the collection.

Package and label discarded materials for future authorized sales of school property.