

Cornell School District

Instructional Materials Selection and Evaluation

Adopted: June 5, 2024

Guidelines for Selection of Education Materials

1. Responsibility for Selection of Materials

- a. As the governing body of the school district, the Cornell School District's Board of Education is legally responsible for all educational materials in the district.
- b. As a policy-making body, the Board of Education delegates the responsibility for the selection of educational materials to the professionally-trained personnel employed by Cornell School District.

2. Definition of Educational Materials

Educational materials as herein applied mean all materials used within classrooms and all materials circulated from the library media centers for student use, such as basic textbooks, supplemental materials, library books, pamphlets, magazines, study prints, pictures, projectable material, maps, and electronically recorded materials.

3. Objectives for Selection of Materials for Library Media Centers

The media services program provides students and teachers access to information in a variety of formats for instructional and leisure purposes. The center must provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty with diverse appeal representing different points of view. Specifically, objectives are to:

- i. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
- ii. Provide materials that will stimulate the growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
- iii. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens under guidance may develop the practice of critical analysis.
- iv. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

4. Parents' Responsibility

The district recognizes that parents may decide to have a work excluded from a student's personal reading, viewing, or listening unless the specific material is part of a legal mandate.

5. Objectives for Selection of Textbooks and Supplemental Materials

Basic course-adopted materials for classroom use are chosen after thorough investigation by committees of certified professional personnel. Materials are chosen to:

- i. Ensure accurate and up-to-date content by selecting textbooks and supplemental materials that include new concepts, insights, and facts at an appropriate reading level.
- ii. Select textbooks and supplemental materials that provide for sequential growth from level to level
- iii. Select textbooks and supplemental materials that provide a fair representation of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups, minority groups, women, and their contributions to our American heritage.
- iv. Select textbooks and supplemental materials that do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, handicap, or age or any other factor prohibited by state or federal law.

6. Criteria for the Selection of Educational Materials and Acceptance of Gift Materials, may include:

- a. Educational significance and readability.
- b. Contribution the subject matter makes to the curriculum.
- c. Favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel.
- d. Reputation and significance of the author, producer, and publisher.
- e. Validity and appropriateness of the material.
- f. Contribution the material makes to the balance of representative viewpoints on controversial issues.
- g. High degree of potential user appeal.
- h. High artistic quality and/or literary style.
- i. Quality and variety of format.
- j. Value commensurate with cost and/or need.
- k. Timeliness of universality.

7. Review of Materials Collection

- a. Materials that have become obsolete or not longer fit the current curriculum are removed from the collection by the media specialist through the process called weeding. Efforts should be made by the media specialists to include teachers where appropriate in the weeding process.

- b. Criteria for the selection of educational materials also apply in the weeding process.

8. Reconsideration Procedures

Any resident of the school district may raise objection to the instructional materials used in the district's educational program.

The Board of Education has delegated the responsibility for review of materials to a Reconsideration Committee made up of citizens and educators who make their decisions based upon careful study of the material in question. The committee's decision is final. However, the complainant may appeal the committee's decision to the Board. Thus, the Board is delegating this particular responsibility to a representative group of citizens and staff, while retaining its legal status as the ultimate authority in determining policies and making decisions at the local district level.

In instances where a citizen of the school district questions instructional materials but does not request their removal from general student use, the matter will be resolved with the principal, teacher, and/or media personnel at the building level.

In instances where a citizen of the school district questions instructional materials and request their removal from general use, the following procedures apply:

- a. A copy of the Selection of Instructional Material Policy and copy of the Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material form, which must be filled out in order to initiate or to review a reconsideration, are given to the complainant by the principal.
- b. Upon receiving the Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material from the complainant, the principal will acknowledge the request and notify the committee chairperson who will set up a meeting of the Reconsideration Committee. The use of the material under reconsideration shall not be restricted until a vote for removal is made by the committee.
- c. The Reconsideration Committee shall be made up of the following:
 - i. One teacher
 - ii. One principal
 - iii. One media specialist
 - iv. Two residents of the community.
 - v. The chairperson will be selected from the committee membership by the membership.
 - vi. A quorum shall consist of three members present.
 - vii. In case of a tie vote concerning a reconsideration request, the material will be retained in the district. An affirmative vote by a majority of the full membership, i.e. three members, is required to remove or restrict educational material.

- d. The committee will meet as needed to consider requests for reconsideration. The committee will be within 30 days of receiving a request for reconsideration.
- e. The complainant will receive copies of all information which is provided to the committee.
- f. Basic written ground rules for the conduct of the reconsideration committee meeting shall be established in advance by a majority vote of the committee and shall be binding on all committee members, the complainant, and any other individuals present at the meeting. These ground rules shall not prevent the chairperson of the committee from ruling on procedural matters not specifically enumerated in the written statement.
- g. At the beginning of the meeting the committee will receive additional comments from the complainant if he/she requests. The committee may also, at its discretion, accept testimony from other citizens and professional staff. If public testimony is received from others present, the complainant may provide additional comments at the end of the other public testimony. Once committee deliberations have begun, no further testimony will be accepted from the complainant or others present unless specifically requested by the committee chairperson.
- h. Within two regularly scheduled sessions after the request has been received, the committee, by public vote of the majority of the members present, will decide on one of the following courses of action:
 - i. Retain the material under reconsideration for general student use.
 - ii. Make the material under consideration no longer available in the school district for general student use, available on a limited basis for specific classroom use, or available at a specific level—elementary, middle, or high school.
- i. If, in addition to its decision, a committee majority has additional observations and/or recommendations regarding the material in question, the committee may convey that information to the Superintendent of Schools in writing. The Superintendent will share that information with the Board of Education, determine, in consultation with other appropriate staff, what (if any) management action shall be taken, and communicate that decision in writing to the Board of Education, the Reconsideration Committee, the complainant, and all appropriate staff.
- j. The complainant will be notified of the committee's decision and the principle reasons for its action.

A copy of the committee's report will be forwarded to the Superintendent who will communicate the report to the School Board. A copy will be retained in the district office.
- k. No committee member may be involved in a request for reconsideration and serve on the committee during the specific reconsideration procedure. In such a case, an alternate committee member shall be designated by the person or group making the original appointment.
- l. Requests to reconsider materials which have been previously before the committee must receive approval of a majority of the committee members present before the

materials will again be reconsidered. Every Reconsideration Request Form shall be acted upon by the committee.

- m. If a Board appeal is requested, it must be filed with the Superintendent of Schools in writing within 30 days of the committee's decision.

9. Textbook and Supplementary Materials

Selection of materials will be made by professional personnel through reading, listening, viewing, careful examination, and use of reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aides, and/or the selection checklist/guidelines used by the school district. All materials whether purchased, rented, ect., shall be previewed prior to use. Any questionable or controversial material should be cleared with administration.

a. Elementary Instructional Materials

Textbook/instructional materials committees may consist of teachers selected from the upper and lower elementary levels, the elementary media staff member, and elementary principal. Communication requesting samples of current materials will be sent by the principal to the various textbook companies.

Texts and supplemental materials may be studied for one to two years. Studying and examination of the materials will be required of committee members preceding final selection. The criteria listed in Section 5 for selecting educational materials will be utilized as a basis for developing criteria for a specific adoption. Others will be included as appropriate.

Sales representatives from companies whose textbooks/instructional materials receive major consideration may be permitted to appear at committee meetings. Sales representatives must contact the principal.

Decisions for textbook and supplementary materials adoptions will be made by the committee. The materials will then be added to the standard requisition list and the old materials will be removed from that list. A copy of the specific selection criteria used by the committee will also be forwarded to the superintendent together with requests for any material, equipment, or in-service needed to assure successful implementation of the adoption and a plan for providing the same.

b. Secondary Instructional Materials

Selection of text/instructional materials is made by the staff at the department in which the resource will be used. The principal serves as the chairpersons of all text selection committees and participates in the final approval of the selected materials. Approval of the principal will also be sought if there is any question regarding the merit of recommended materials.

To the greatest degree possible, book adoptions will be conducted simultaneously on an inter-school basis by textbook committees comprised of department representatives

from both schools. Intra-school participation is achieved through informal communication and feedback between and among the textbook/instructional materials committee member(s), and the principal, and all department members.

The principal will make the necessary contacts with publishers to obtain sample copies of books and make them available to the selection committee.

Criteria for book selection will be set up in the form of guidelines or a checklist which identifies the desired features of book/materials to be finally selected. General criteria as discussed in Section 6 are applicable to all selections. Additional criteria specific to a particular curricular area will be added as appropriate.

It is further recommended that the committee inquire about the materials from other school districts that are presently utilizing the text.

The chairperson of any book selection committee shall communicate the title, publisher, author, and copyright date of any new books added to the superintendent using the Committee Report on Textbook Adoption. This information will be added to the general list of printed teaching materials used in the district's secondary schools. A copy of the specific selection criteria used by the committee will also be forwarded to the superintendent together with requests for any materials, equipment, or inservice needed to assure successful implementation of the adoption and a plan for providing the same.

The school district shall not discriminate in the selection and evaluation of instructional and library materials on the basis of sex, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, religion, color, handicap, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability.

Committee Report on Textbook Adoption–Exhibit (1)

Subject _____ Grade Level _____

Books to be sampled and studied:

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE	PUBLISHER	LIST PRICE
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Choices narrowed to:

TITLE	AUTHOR	PUBLISHER	LIST PRICE
1.			
2.			
3.			

Final Choice:

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE	PUBLISHER	ISBN #
1.				

Date of Committee Adoption _____ Signed _____

Title of Textbook Being Replaced:

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE	PUBLISHER
1.			

Committee Members:

Committee Chairperson: Be sure to send one copy of this report to the Superintendent.

Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material—Exhibit (2)

Date: _____

Title of Material: _____

Author: _____

Publisher: _____

Type of Material (e.g. book or film): _____

1. What specifically in the material do you object? (Please be very specific and add pages if needed listing words, phrases, pages where they are located, etc..)

2. Did you find any value in this material?

3. What would you like the committee to do with this material?

- Remove the material district-wide.
- Limit to use in specific classes.
- Limit to use at specific level—elementary, middle, or high school.

Name of person filing appeal: _____

Address: _____

email: _____

Telephone: _____ Signature: _____