

Policy Title:

Selection of Learning Resources

Code No. **603.3**

Statement of Policy

Learning resources are selected by the school district to support its educational goals and objectives and to implement, enrich, and support the instructional program. Resources must serve the breadth and depth of the curriculum and provide for the needs and interests of individual students. It is the obligation of the district to provide intellectual and physical access to materials that cover a wide range of abilities and many differing points of view. To this end, principles of intellectual freedom must be placed above personal opinion, and reason above prejudice, in the selection of resources.

The Board of Education shall delegate to the superintendent the authority and responsibility for the selection of all learning resources. The superintendent delegates responsibility for actual selection to the appropriately trained personnel who shall discharge this obligation consistent with the Board's selection criteria and procedures. The selection process shall involve representatives of the professional staff directly affected by the selections and/or the professional library media staff.

The Board also allows for systematic review of existing resources and permits the reappraisal of allegedly inappropriate resources through the established process.

The learning resources covered by this policy include both print and nonprint items selected for library media centers, classrooms, learning centers, and laboratories. Included are textbooks, gift materials, resources retrieved or viewed electronically, materials borrowed from other agencies, and guest speakers, among others.

General Selection Criteria

Staff members involved in selection of learning resources shall use the following criteria as a guide:

- educational significance;
- contribution the subject matter makes to the curriculum;
- the interests of students and staff;
- favorable reviews found in standard selection sources;
- favorable recommendations based on preview;
- examination of resources by professional personnel;
- reputation and significance of the author, producer, publisher, or speaker;
- validity and appropriateness of the resource for intended use;
- contribution the resource makes to the range of representative viewpoints on controversial issues;
- high degree of potential appeal to users;

- quality and variety of format;
- value commensurate with cost and/or need;
- timeliness and/or permanence; and
- integrity of the resource.

Specific Selection Criteria

1. Learning resources shall be appropriate to the subject area, and for the age, emotional development, ability, learning styles, and social development of the students for whom the resources are intended.
2. Physical format and appearance of resources shall be suitable for intended use.
3. Resources shall be selected to give students an awareness of our pluralistic society, and provide a global perspective.
4. Resources shall be selected which support multicultural/gender-fair viewpoints and encourage all students to understand, appreciate, relate to and value cultural and personal diversity.
5. Resources shall be selected to meet the needs of the wide range of student physical, emotional, and cognitive development.
6. Resources shall be selected which support and encourage students to examine their attitudes and behaviors as individuals, and to relate those attitudes and behaviors to the concepts of duties and responsibilities as citizens.
7. Resources shall be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses of language and style or other elements.
8. The selection process shall provide opportunities for participation by students, teachers, support staff, administrators, teacher librarian, and other members of the community.
9. Selection, an ongoing process, shall include routine procedures for removal and/or replacement of worn, obsolete, dated, unused or unusable resources.
10. Gift materials shall be judged by the criteria listed in the preceding statements and be accepted or rejected on the basis of the criteria.

Procedure for Reconsideration of Resources

In the event resources are questioned, the principles of intellectual freedom shall be defended rather than specific resources.

The Board recognizes the right of individual parents to request that their child not be required to read, view, or listen to specific resources, provided a written request is made to the appropriate building principal.

A standing Reconsideration Committee shall be formed in each building by the second week of each school year. The purpose of the committee shall be to review any complaint received during the school year, learn all the circumstances related to the acquisition and use of the challenged resource, review the guidelines listed in the selection policy, decide whether the policy has been followed correctly, and then recommend action regarding future use of the resource. The committee at secondary buildings shall consist of: the building principal, a teacher librarian, a teacher, a parent or community member, a student, and the chair of the Secondary Library-Media Department. The committee at elementary buildings shall consist of: the building principal, a media specialist, a teacher, a parent or community member, and the elementary library media department. Any staff member responsible for the selection or the providing of the challenged material will not be included on the committee. If necessary, the principal will appoint a temporary replacement.

When Complaints are Received from Parents or other Community Members about Learning Resources

1. All staff members shall report complaints to the building principal orally or in written form.
2. The building principal or a designated representative shall contact the complainant to discuss the objection and attempt to resolve it informally by explaining the philosophy and goals of the school district, building, course, and/or library media center.
3. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the building principal shall provide the complainant with "The Learning Resources Selection Policy," including the form "Statement of Concern About Learning Resources," which must be filled out completely and returned to the building principal within ten working days, before the complaint will be given consideration.
4. If the completed form is not returned within the time period, the issue shall be considered closed. If the form is returned, the reasons for selection of the resource shall be restated by the appropriate staff and turned in to the building principal.
5. Resources shall not be removed from use, or access restricted within the district, pending a final decision. However, access to the resources can be denied to the student(s) of the complainant(s), if requested.
6. Within 20 working days upon receipt of a completed "Statement of Concern About Learning Resources" form:
 - a. The principal shall notify the superintendent, appropriate director of education, and the building's Reconsideration Committee that a complaint has been received.
 - b. Each member of the Reconsideration Committee must read, view, or listen to the learning resource in question in its entirety.

- c. After both the staff member responsible for selecting the learning resource and the complainant have met with the Reconsideration Committee, the committee will discuss the resource and make a decision.
- d. The building principal shall send written notification of the action taken to all involved parties as well as to the appropriate director of education and the superintendent.
- e. Any person not satisfied with the decision of the committee may file a request to appeal the decision to the Board of Education. Within ten working days of the receipt of the written notification, the complainant or user may file an appeal in the superintendent's office for a school board hearing. It shall be the superintendent's responsibility to schedule and expedite the hearing.
- f. Each Board member must read, view or listen to the learning resource in question in its entirety within 30 days of when the complaint was presented to them. At a following designated board meeting, the complainant and a representative of the Reconsideration Committee will be allowed to present information to the board pertaining to the complaint. The board will then deliberate action to be taken, with a decision being announced no later than the following board meeting. The superintendent or designee will provide written notification of the board's decision to all participating parties within ten working days of the board's decision.
- g. Persons dissatisfied with the decision of the board may appeal to the Iowa Board of Education pursuant to state law.

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STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LEARNING RESOURCES

The Board of Education delegates the responsibility for distribution of this form to building principals. The completed form must be returned to the principal who issued it within ten (10) working days.

SCHOOL: _____ PRINCIPAL: _____

DATE ISSUED: _____ DATE RETURNED: _____

NAME OF COMPLAINANT: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: HOME _____ WORK _____

DESCRIBE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE LEARNING RESOURCE

TYPE OF RESOURCE: _____

TITLE/NAME: _____

AUTHOR/PRODUCER: _____

WHAT BROUGHT THIS RESOURCE TO YOUR ATTENTION: _____

PLEASE COMMENT ON THE RESOURCE AS A WHOLE, AS WELL AS BEING SPECIFIC ON THOSE MATTERS THAT CONCERN YOU. (USE THE OTHER SIDE IF NEEDED)

OPTIONAL: WHAT RESOURCE(S) DO YOU SUGGEST TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE TOPIC COVERED BY THE RESOURCE? _____

SIGNATURE OF THE COMPLAINANT: _____

DATE: _____

A signed form signifies that the learning resource has been read, viewed, or listened to in its entirety by the complainant.