

West Salem School District
SELECTION AND RECONSIDERATION
OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS POLICY

I. SELECTION

Instructional materials (print and non-print) are selected by the school district to implement, enrich and support the educational program for the student. Materials must serve both the breadth of the curriculum and the needs and interests of individual students. It is the obligation of the district to provide for a wide range of abilities and to respect the diversity of many differing points of view. To this end, principles must be placed above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality and appropriateness.

The West Salem School District shall provide library facilities within the school building and make available to all pupils a current, balanced collection of books, basic reference materials, texts, periodicals, and audiovisual material, which depict in an accurate and unbiased way the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American Society. (See Appendices A and B).

The West Salem School District shall not discriminate in the selection and evaluation of print and non-print materials on the basis of gender, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures (See Board Policy 111).

Library Media Center:

The selection and purchase of library materials is the responsibility of each school's designated Library Media Director who is familiar with grade-level curricula, current holdings, and professional selection aids.

Texts and classroom materials:

Selection of textbooks and other classroom materials shall be made by the appropriate committees, departments and teachers, with the approval of the principals and superintendent, using selection criteria.

Donated materials:

Materials that are donated to the district become the property of the school with no stipulations attached. As such, donated materials shall be held to the same criteria as purchased materials and used, shelved or weeded based on selection criteria.

Other media:

Formats such as computer software, videos, DVDs, CDs, and Internet-accessed subscriptions are evaluated using the same criteria as print instructional materials.

II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION:

- A. The Board of Education is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the West Salem School District.
- B. The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained and certified staff employed by the school system. For the purpose of this rule the term "instructional materials" includes print and non-print materials whether considered classroom or media center materials.
- C. While selection of materials involves many people—principals, teachers, students, supervisors, community persons and media specialists—the responsibility for coordinating the selection of most instructional materials and making the recommendations for purchase rests with certified library media directors.
- D. The media director is responsible for keeping materials current and for the disposal of those materials considered invalid due to outdated information, clearly inaccurate information, and materials no longer conforming to the selection criteria.
- E. Responsibility for coordinating the selection of instructional materials for the distribution to classes shall rest with the appropriate teacher. For the purpose of this rule the term "instructional material" includes textbooks and other print and non-print material provided in multiple copies for use by a total class or a major segment of such class.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION AND DISCARDING OF MATERIALS

The success of the educational program in meeting the needs of the students and faculty depends upon the quantity, scope, and quality of the materials available in the collection. The

West Salem School District
Policy 361

selection of any item shall be made on the basis of that item's contribution to these needs. Materials, whether purchased or donated, shall be considered individually and selected for their strengths based on the following criteria:

- A. Materials shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the school district and the objectives of the specific courses.
- B. Materials shall meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.
- C. Materials shall be rejected if the material graphics are clearly glaring, lurid or vulgar and/or the language is clearly coarse, crude, crass or vulgar. Materials shall be judged for appropriateness for the age of the designated student at this time (See Appendix G).
- D. Materials shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, and social development of the student for whom the materials are selected.
- E. Materials shall have aesthetic, literary, or diverse social value.
- F. Materials shall be chosen to foster respect for women, minority, and ethnic groups, and shall realistically represent our pluralistic society, along with the roles and life styles open to both women and men in today's world.
- G. Materials shall be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses.
- H. Biases or slanted materials may be provided to meet specific curriculum objectives.
- I. Material may be discarded based on the condition of the book (missing pages, soiled pages, badly torn pages, aged paper, too fine a print, un-repairable binding, dismal edition, etc.).
- J. Items that have had very little circulation in the past five years.
- K. Currency/datedness/accuracy of content/or relevance to current curriculum.
- L. Inferior or faulty non-print materials.

Materials that are discarded shall be disposed of at the discretion of the LMC director and other school personnel based on the reason the particular item was discarded.

V. RECONSIDERATION

The School Board of Education of the School District of West Salem recognizes the right of any resident or employee of the school district to object to instructional and library materials. The review of questioned materials shall be treated objectively, unemotionally, and as an important routine action. Every effort shall be made to consider the best interests of the students, school, curriculum and the community.

If concern is expressed or an inquiry is made to a school board member, administrator, or teacher, that person is to direct the complaint to the appropriate LMC Specialist and/or the building Principal. There shall not be an attempt by a board member or school official to assume sole responsibility for reconsideration. The steps for reconsideration are set up to be followed in sequence when the steps are needed for resolution of the complaint. The superintendent or his/her designee shall be responsible for the conduct of the organizational meeting. Special meetings may be called by the superintendent to consider temporary removal of materials in unusual circumstances. Temporary removal shall require a three-fourth vote of the full committee. Unnecessary confusion or delay may be avoided if the following parameters are met:

- A. The Reconsideration Committee shall meet prior to October 1 of each school year. The superintendent shall appoint the members of the reconsideration committee.
 - Five members of the community
 - Two teachers, one from each building other than the building of the principal representative.
 - One LMC Specialist (See Appendix F)
 - One building principal (See Appendix F)
 - One high school student (Non-voting member)

The calendar of regular meetings and notices shall be made public through the superintendent's office.

The chairperson cannot be an employee or officer of the district. A secretary, who shall take notes at all meetings and be responsible for audio recording the minutes, shall be appointed by the District Superintendent from outside the committee membership.

West Salem School District
Policy 361

Any committee member who is not present at a scheduled meeting must make arrangements to listen to the audio recording of missed meeting before the next scheduled meeting. Committee members failing to meet this requirement shall forfeit voting privileges.

Initial Complaint Procedure

- A. Any resident or employee of the school district may object to instructional and library materials used in the district's educational program and shall be treated with respect as it is that person's right to request that material be reviewed.
- B. All complaints, whether received by telephone, letter, or in personal conversation, shall be referred to the following personnel according to the circumstance:
 - Staff members shall report to the building principal involved.
 - All complaints made directly to the building principals shall be discussed with the involved staff person(s).
 - All complaints made to other personnel of the school district shall be directed to the appropriate building principal.
- C. The principal shall contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and attempt to resolve it informally by explaining the educational philosophy and goals and policies of the school district.
- D. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the complainant shall be supplied with the written copies of the district's educational philosophy and goals and the Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Policy, which includes the reconsideration form and procedure. (See Appendix D)
- E. The reconsideration form must be completed, signed, and returned to the superintendent before formal consideration shall be given to the complaint. (See Appendix E)
- F. Access to challenged materials shall not be restricted during the reconsideration process.

West Salem School District
Policy 361

- G. Within five school days of the receipt of the reconsideration form, the superintendent shall notify the chairperson of the Reconsideration Committee and file the materials with the Committee.
- H. The Committee Chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the Reconsideration Committee within five school days of the receipt of the reconsideration form (This is not to imply that the meeting be held within five days).
- I. The meeting time and place shall be communicated to the superintendent's office for public notification. Persons requesting to speak must contact the Chairperson.
- J. The complainant shall be kept informed by the secretary concerning the status of the complaint, including the time/place of the First Meeting.

Formal Reconsideration Procedure

The Chairperson will set the time for reconsideration meetings and will chair them. The reconsideration meetings will be scheduled at least five school days apart. No less than three days prior to the first meeting, the School District Office personnel shall assist with the following steps:

- A. Distribute copies of the signed reconsideration form to the committee.
- B. Distribute reputable, professionally prepared reviews of the material when available.
- C. Distribute copies of challenged material as available.
- D. The committee shall read the print material in its entirety or view non-print material in its entirety.
- E. Assess the worth of the material by reading reviews and by consulting standard evaluation aids.
- F. Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the materials as a whole, not on passages or words pulled out of context.

First Meeting

The complainant shall be notified three days in advance of first Reconsideration Committee meeting. The committee shall meet no sooner than five school days but no more than ten school days after receiving the signed reconsideration form. At the first meeting, the committee:

- A. Shall determine the length of meeting, including time limits on presentations.
- B. Shall follow "Robert's Rules of Order" throughout the meeting.
- C. Shall review aloud the "Instructions from the Board" (See Appendix C—deserves a review from Board).
- D. Shall listen to complainant his/her views (Speakers must follow the guidelines set in the "Instructions from the Board").
- E. Shall listen to one person who is willing to defend the reason/s of why the material should not be removed.
- F. Shall listen to individuals with special knowledge as invited by the Chairperson.
- G. Shall discuss the materials.
- H. May vote to resolve the complaint by deciding one of the following options:
 - 1. To take no removal action.
 - 2. To remove all or part of the challenged materials from the total school environment.
 - 3. To allow students to use alternate materials approved by school personnel.
 - 4. To agree to a limitation of the educational use of materials.
 - 5. In the event that one of the these four options are selected, the superintendent shall notify the complainant of the decision and send a formal report

West Salem School District
Policy 361

and recommendation to the appropriate building principal and school board.

6. If the issues are not resolved, the committee shall hold a second meeting.

Second Meeting

The complainant shall be notified three days in advance of the second Reconsideration Committee meeting. The committee shall meet no less than five school days but no more than ten days after the first meeting. At the second meeting, the committee:

- A. Shall follow "Robert's Rules of Order" throughout the meeting.
- B. Shall review aloud the "Instructions from the Board "
(See Appendix C—deserves a review from Board)
- C. Shall determine an amount of time that will be allotted for views from both sides of the issue to be expressed. Under no circumstance shall the time allotted exceed one hour. One hour will allow a half hour for both sides to defend their position.
- D. Shall listen to the complainant and other interested parties express their views.
- E. Shall recommend one of the following, as determined by majority vote:
 1. To take no removal action.
 2. To remove all or part of the challenged materials from the total school environment.
 3. To allow students to use alternate materials approved by school personnel.
 4. To agree to a limitation of the educational use of materials.
 5. Within five days of the second meeting, the superintendent shall notify complainant of the decision and send a formal report and recommendation to the appropriate building principal and school board.

West Salem School District
Policy 361

F. If the issues are not resolved, additional meeting(s) shall be held.

Reconsideration Procedure (After the final decision has been reached)

- A. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection or use of the material.
- B. If the complainant is still not satisfied he/she may ask the superintendent within ten days to present an appeal to the Board of Education, which shall make the final determination of the issue complying with existing board policy. The Board of Education may seek assistance from outside resources.
- C. Every request for reconsideration shall be acted upon. Requests to re-evaluate materials that have previously been before the Reconsideration Committee may not be reconsidered for three calendar years.
- D. In the event of a severe overload of challenges, the committee may appoint a subcommittee of members or non-members to make recommendations to the full committee. The composition of this subcommittee shall approximate the representation of the full committee.
- E. Committee members directly associated with the selection, use, or challenge of the reconsidered material shall be excused from the committee. The superintendent may appoint a temporary replacement for the excused member. The replacement shall be of the same general qualifications of the person being excused.
- F. The committee should never be placed in the position of appearing to defend itself, its members, or the school staff. The committee must maintain a non-adversarial position.

APPROVED: April 10, 2006

Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials
Appendix A

Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)

121.02 (1), Wis.Stats. Each school board shall:

- (h) Provide adequate instructional materials, texts and library services, which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.

Administrative Rules

The Department of Public Instruction Administrative Rules relating to this standard require the following:

P18.01 (2) (h), Wis. Adm. Code Library Media Services. Each school district board shall:

1. Have on file a written long range plan for library services development, which has been formulated by teachers, library and audiovisual personnel and administrators, and approved by the school district board.
2. Designate a licensed library media person to direct and coordinate the district's library media program.
3. Provide library facilities within the school building and make available to all pupils a current, balanced collection of books, basic reference materials, texts, periodicals, and audiovisual material which depict in an accurate and unbiased way the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American Society.
4. Provide library media services to all pupils as follows: to pupils in grades kindergarten through 6, library media services which are performed under the direction of licensed library and audiovisual personnel; and to pupils in grades 7 through 12, library media services which are performed by a licensed library and audiovisual personnel.

APPROVED: April 10, 2006

West Salem School District
Policy 361

Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials
Appendix B

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Accurate: | Free from error or mistake, correct, exact, precise |
| Cultural: | Of or relating to the artistic and intellectual aspects or content of human activity |
| Diversity: | The condition of being different or having differences |
| Pluralistic: | Of relating to, or characterized by pluralism |
| Pluralism: | A state or condition of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest within confines of a common civilization |
| Unbiased: | Characterized by complete absence of prejudice, favoritism, undue or unwarranted preference |

Source: *Webster's Third New International Dictionaries of the English Language Unabridged (1971).*

APPROVED: April 10, 2006

APPENDIX C

Instructions from the Board to the Reconsideration Committee

The policy of this School District related to selection of learning materials states that any resident or employee of the district may formally challenge instructional materials used in the district's educational program. This policy allows those persons in the school and community who are not directly involved in the selection of materials to make their opinion known. The task of the reconsideration committee is to provide an open forum for discussion of challenged materials and to make an informed decision on the challenge.

The most critical component of the reconsideration process is the establishment and maintenance of the committee's credibility in the community. For this purpose, the committee is composed primarily of community members. The community should not, therefore, infer that the community is biased or is obligated to uphold prior professional decisions. For this same reason, a community member will be selected to chair the committee.

The presence of the school media specialist and the administrative member on the committee will assure continuity from year to year and will lend professional knowledge of the selection process. A student member is essential since s/he is the closest to the student body and will immediately be affected by the decision of the committee.

The reconsideration process, the task of this committee, is just one part of the selection continuum. Materials are purchased to meet an educational need. They are reviewed and examined, if possible, prior to purchase; they are periodically re-evaluated through updates, discarding or re-examination. Librarians and school personnel regularly read great numbers of reviews in the selection process, and occasionally errors are possible.

In reconsidering challenged materials, the role of the committee, and particularly the chairperson, is to produce a climate for a free exchange of ideas. The committee should begin by finding items of agreement, keeping in mind that the larger the group participating, the greater the amount of information available and, therefore, the greater the number of possible approaches to the problem.

Instructions from the Board (continued)

West Salem School District
Policy 361

The complainant may choose to make an oral presentation to the committee to expand and elaborate on the complaint. The committee will listen to the complainant, to those with special knowledge and to any other interested persons. In these discussions, the committee should be aware of relevant social pressures, which are affecting the situation. Individuals who may try to dominate or impose in a decision must not be allowed to do so. Minority viewpoints expressed by groups or individuals must be heard, and observers must be made to feel welcome. It is important that the committee create a calm, nonvolatile environment in which to deal with a potentially volatile situation. To this end, the complainant will be kept continuously informed of the progress of the complaint.

The committee will listen to the views of all interested persons before reaching a decision. In deliberating its decision, the committee should remember that the school system must be responsive to the needs, tastes, and opinions of the community it serves. Therefore, the committee must distinguish between broad community sentiment and the attempts to impose appropriateness of the material. The question to be answered by the committee is-- "Is the material appropriate for its designated audience at this time?"

The committee's final decision shall be: (1) to take no removal action, (2) to remove all or part of the challenged materials from the total school environment, (3) to allow students to use alternate materials approved by school personnel, or (4) to agree to a limitation of the educational use of materials.

The committee chairperson will instruct the secretary to convey the committee's decision to the Office of the Superintendent. The decision should detail the rationale on which the decision was based. A letter will be sent to the complainant and to the appropriate building, outlining the committee's final decision.

APPROVED: April 10, 2006

West Salem School District
Policy 361

Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials
Appendix D

Sample Letter to Complainant

Date:

Dear _____:

Your concern over the use of _____ in our school district is appreciated. The district has developed specific procedures for selecting materials, but realizes that not everyone will agree with every selection made. To help you understand the selection process, I am sending you copies of the district

- Educational Goals and Objectives
- Selection and Reconsideration Policy
- Reconsideration Form

If you are still concerned after you review this material, please complete the Reconsideration Form and return it to me. You may be assured of prompt attention to your request.

If I have not heard from you within two weeks, I will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint.

Sincerely,

Principal

APPROVED: April 10, 2006

West Salem School District
Policy 361

Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials
Appendix E

Reconsideration Form

Submit to
Superintendent
West Salem District Office
405 East Hamlin Street
West Salem, WI 54669

Please fill in all applicable information:

Reconsideration Initiated by (your name):

Telephone # : _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Complainant Represents:

Self

Organization

Name of Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP Code _____

Author/Creator of

Material: _____ Type: _____
such as book, video, software)

Title: _____

Publisher/Producer/Source:

Date of
Publication/Production _____

1. How was this material brought to your attention?

West Salem School District
Policy 361

2. Did you review the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

3. To what in the item, do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages, frames, pictures etc.)

4. In your opinion what do you think might be the result of a student's listening, viewing, or reading of this material?

5. What instructional value do you see in this item?

6. In place of this material what would you recommend to be of equal or superior quality for the purpose(s) intended?

7. What would you recommend your school do about this material?

- Do not assign or make available to my child
- Withdraw it from all students
- Allow my child to use alternate material(s)
- Other (please specify)_____

8. Do you wish to make an oral presentation to the Reconsideration Committee at the First Meeting?

- No
- Yes—Please contact the district secretary (786-0700) to be placed on the agenda.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPROVED: April 10, 2006

West Salem School District
Policy 361

Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional Materials
Appendix F

The Reconsideration Committee

Prior to October 1 of each year, the Superintendent shall appoint the members of the Reconsideration Committee. An attempt shall be made to include the following members of the committee:

- The Superintendent will request each School Board Member submit 2 names from the community of which 5 will be chosen.
- Two teachers, one from each building other than the building of the principal representative.
- One LMC specialist :
 - ES 2005-06, 2006-07, 2014-15 school year
 - HS 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 school year
 - MS 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 school year
- One Building Principal:
 - MS 2005-06, 2006-07, 2013-14 school year
 - ES 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 school year
 - HS 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 school year
- One non voting high school student

APPROVED: April 10, 2006

APPENDIX G

Definition of terms used in Criteria for Selection of Material:

Coarse: Inferior quality; common; base; indelicate in taste, language or manner; vulgar.

Crass: Gross; coarse; stupid; obtuse.

Crude: Rough; lacking in culture and refinement.

Glaring: Plainly obvious; unpleasantly conspicuous; vulgarly showy.

Lurid: Glaringly vivid or sensational

Vulgar: Lacking in good taste; coarse; boorish; crude; indecent or obscene; lacking in refinement.

Source: *The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1977).

APPROVED: April 10, 2006