

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION

Responsibilities for the Selection of Educational Materials

In Wisconsin, it is the role of the local school board to establish written policies, procedures, and rules for the operation of the schools within the District and to adopt textbooks. The District also has the responsibility to provide adequate materials and texts which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of the American society. In addition, the District shall not discriminate in the selection and evaluation of instructional materials on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation gender identity, gender expression or physical, cognitive, emotional or learning disability in its education programs or activities. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

The Board of Education, as the governing body of the District, is legally responsible for all educational materials utilized within the instructional program of the Appleton Area School District. The selection of educational materials is delegated to the professionally trained and certified personnel employed by the school system. The responsibility for coordinating and maintaining qualitative standards in the selection process rests with the Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction (ACI) department. Textbooks, however, must be formally adopted by the Board of Education since they often constitute the major content of the curriculum.

Objective of, and Criteria for, the Selection of Educational Materials

The primary objective of selecting materials is to implement, support, and enrich the educational program of the school system. While specific criteria are developed by the individual curriculum committees, the general criteria utilized in the selection processes are:

- Materials are selected consistent with the educational goals of the District regarding locally designed standards, State standards, and National standards.
- Materials selected are appropriate for the age, social development, and maturity of students.
- Materials and information shall meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.
- Materials and information shall have factual, aesthetic, literary, ethical, or social value.
- Materials and information chosen shall be written/produced by competent and qualified authors and producers.
- Materials and information shall be chosen to represent our pluralistic society and to foster respect for all groups of people who form our society.
- Physical format and appearance of materials and information shall be suitable for their intended use.
- Materials are selected on all levels of difficulty with diverse appeal and differing points of view.

361.1 (cont.)

- The selection of materials on political theories and ideologies, religion, public issues, and on topics considered by some to be controversial, is directed toward maintaining a balance representing various views.
- Materials are judged as a whole taking into account the author's/producer's intent rather than focusing on single words, phrases, pictures, or incidents taken out of context.

Procedures for Handling Objections to Educational Materials

A. Request for Use of Alternative Materials

The option is always open for a parent or guardian (hereinafter parent) to object to specific educational materials being used with his/her child as part of the educational program. However, no parent or organization has the right to limit other students' access to materials which are part of the District's educational program.

B. Request for Reconsideration of Educational Materials and Textbooks

1. Any adult resident of the District, any parent of a child enrolled in the District, or any employee may raise objection to materials used in the educational program. In the event of an objection to the use of a specific educational material, every effort shall be made to first resolve the matter at the school level.
2. If the matter is not resolved, the complainant may formally challenge the use of specific materials at the District level.
 - a. This complaint must be in writing, using the District's Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material form – Appleton Area School District (AASD) Educational Materials Review Committee, and shall be sent to the Superintendent.
 - b. The Superintendent forwards the form to the chair of the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee, which is composed of citizens, professional staff members, and students. The task of the Committee is to review the material in question and provide a written recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools regarding its continued use in the District.
 - c. The Superintendent shall review the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee's recommendation. The Superintendent may ratify, amend, or overrule the recommendation of the Committee. The Superintendent will provide copies of the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee's recommendation and his/her decision to the complainant within five (5) school days of receipt of the Committee's report. The Superintendent will provide the Board of Education and the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee with copies of his/her decision.

361.1 (cont.)

3. Appeal Process

- a. If the original complainant is not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, a request may be filed with the Superintendent to have the matter placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting. The request needs to be filed with the Superintendent within ten (10) school days of the date of the receipt of the Superintendent's decision. If the appeal request is submitted less than five (5) school days prior to the next regularly scheduled board meeting, the Superintendent may move the matter to the next subsequent regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.
- b. The Board of Education, meeting as a committee of the whole, shall constitute the final step in the appeal process.
 1. The Board shall review the documentation accompanying the Request Form as well as the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee minutes and other related Committee materials to determine whether or not procedural and non-discriminatory guidelines outlined in this policy were followed.
 2. At its discretion, the Board may elect to conduct interviews with all parties pertinent to the material review process.
 3. A decision of the Board with regard to action taken is final.

Cross References: Student Discrimination Complaint Procedures, 411.2-Rule
Educational Materials Selection, 361.1-Rule

Legal References: Wisconsin State Statutes 118.03, 118.13, 119.18, 120.13,
120.49 and 121.02

Adoption Date: June 26, 1993

Amended Dates: January 13, 2003 and October 24, 2011

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION

Procedures

I. **Definitions**

Educational materials - the general term used to refer to all print and non-print materials or resources which are used as a part of the educational program of the District. Throughout this policy, the term “materials” shall be used to mean educational materials.

Textbooks - the book or set of materials which serves as the foundation of the content of any Board-approved course. In Wisconsin, textbooks must be formally adopted by the Board of Education.

Supplementary materials - books or other non-print materials used within the context of the instructional program which are not included in the definitions of educational materials or textbooks listed above. Other resources used by the school system in its educational program such as field trips, resource persons, speakers or dramatic events, are not within the scope of this policy.

II. **Procedures for Selection of Educational Materials and Textbooks**

Curriculum revision is an ongoing process as defined in the AASD Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction Handbook. This Handbook is available on the AASD website and delineates the processes leading to Board approval for curriculum revision, adoption of new courses, and implementation of curriculum materials.

III. **Procedures for Selection of Supplementary Materials**

The use of supplementary materials in the educational program is based on the criteria in this policy, the needs of the curriculum, and the judgment of the professional staff. Whenever a teacher plans to utilize supplementary materials beyond the normal parameters of the curriculum, the matter shall be discussed with the building principal or appropriate supervisor.

IV. **Use of Materials in the Classroom**

A. **Individual Parent or Guardian Request for Alternative Materials**

Parents and guardians will be made aware of curriculum materials being used in the classroom for instructional purposes. The option is always open for a parent to object to a specific educational material being used with his/her child as a part of the educational program. The parent has the right to judge whether certain materials are acceptable for his/her child. However, no individual or organization has the right to limit other students' access to materials which are a part of the District's educational program. Should a parent or guardian find any of the educational materials objectionable this must be communicated to the child's teacher and an alternative material will be provided.

361.1-Rule (cont.)

B. Request for Reconsideration of Educational Materials and Textbooks

Any adult resident of the District, any parent of a child enrolled in the District, or any employee may raise objection to materials used in the educational program. An objection to educational materials should begin with a contact to the office of the school within the attendance area in which the adult resident lives, the child's teacher, or the employee's supervisor.

V. Procedures for Handling Objections to Educational Materials and Textbooks

The principal will review the Educational Materials Selection policy and the objection procedures with the school's professional staff on an annual basis prior to the start of the school year. The professional staff will be reminded that the right to object to materials is recognized by the Board of Education and that individuals exercising that right shall be treated courteously. The staff will also be reminded of the ethical and practical considerations necessary when handling objections.

A. Initial Objection Procedure

The school official or staff member receiving a complaint from an adult resident of the District, any parent of a child enrolled in the District, or any employee shall try to resolve the issue informally. The school official or staff member shall:

1. Explain the District's selection procedure, criteria used for selection, and the qualifications of those who made the selection.
2. Explain the place that the material in question occupies in the educational program and its intended educational use (in the event that the official or staff member does not have knowledge of this information, a person who does, such as the department leader or media person, shall be involved).
3. If the person raising the objection is not satisfied with the initial explanation by the staff member, the complainant shall contact the principal regarding his/her objection and schedule a meeting.
4. The principal will meet with the complainant to apprise him/her of the District's selection policy, criteria for selection, the reason for the selection, and the judgment of other outside professionals in the education field, such as reviewers, regarding the material. Appropriate District-level personnel shall be consulted for their expertise, which may contribute to a resolution of the issue.
5. In the event that the complainant is not satisfied after the meeting with the principal, the principal will inform the complainant of the Materials Review Process and provide the Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material form – Educational Materials Review Committee. This form must be completed by the complainant and returned to the Superintendent. The principal will forward any records relating to the complaint to the Office of the Superintendent.

361.1-Rule (cont.)

B. District Educational Materials Review Procedure

The following procedure is for the purpose of bringing reconsideration requests before a District level committee representing the District, students, and the community after the matter has been reviewed at the school level. The committee is charged with weighing the merits of the request against the educational suitability of the material and then making a recommendation on the disposition of the complaint. The committee shall comply with the directive of Wis. Stat. ss. 121.02 (1) (h) that each school board shall provide adequate instructional materials, texts and library services which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.

Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material shall not be confused with the normal reviewing process as a part of selection. This will not be considered to reflect adversely on the qualifications of the person or persons who made the selection.

1. All formal requests for review must be made on the Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material form – AASD Educational Materials Review Committee.
2. The Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material form must be signed by the complainant and filed with the Superintendent.
3. Within fifteen school days of the receipt of the formal complaint, the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall present the formal complaint to the chair of the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee for evaluation. The task of the Review Committee will be to make a recommendation for disposition of the material in question to the Superintendent.
4. The challenged material will not be removed from use during the reconsideration process until a decision is made by the Superintendent. However, the Superintendent reserves the right to temporarily remove materials pending the reconsideration process if justified by unusual circumstances.

C. AASD Educational Materials Review Committees

Two District materials review committees will be established; one to consider complaints from materials used at grades PK – 6 (elementary) and a second to consider complaints from materials used at grades 7 – 12 (secondary).

1. The AASD Educational Materials Review Committee shall be made up of sixteen (16) members.
 - a. Two teachers from the appropriate level appointed biennially by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
 - b. One Library Media Specialist appointed biennially by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

361.1-Rule (cont.)

- c. Two principals from the appropriate level appointed biennially by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
 - d. One central office administrator appointed biennially by the superintendent or his/her designee.
 - e. Four parents from the appropriate level (K – 6 or 7 – 12) of AASD students. Principals will notice their parent communities and seek volunteers from their school communities who are interested in serving on the committee. An application/lottery process will be established.
 - f. Three non-parent community members who are residents of the District will be selected through an application/lottery process serving a two year term.
 - g. Three high school students (11th/12th grade) with equal representation from the East, West, and North Clusters selected annually by a process determined by the Superintendent's designee. Student representatives will be non-voting members of the committee.
 - h. The Superintendent's designee, serving as the chair of the Committee to facilitate the process as a non-voting member, voting only in the event of a tie due to an even number of committee members.
 - i. An AASD secretary, assigned by the Superintendent's designee, to take minutes at the meeting and assist the Committee with its work as a non-voting member.
2. Consideration shall be provided in the selection process to ensure the same members are not appointed repeatedly. A rotating schedule within each category of committee representation shall be put into place wherein only a portion of each committee representation category changes each year.
 3. Only those members present may recommend action to be taken on the material being reconsidered. Committee members not present shall not vote on the final decision. The discussion of the group is an important element in the decision making process. In the event of a tie, the Committee Chair or the Superintendent's designee will cast a tie-breaking vote.
 4. Committee members directly associated with the complainant shall be excused from the committee during the deliberation on such materials. The superintendent or his/her designee will appoint a temporary replacement for the excused committee member, but such replacement shall be of the same general qualifications of a member excused.

361.1-Rule (cont.)

5. Each year the Committee shall have its first organizational meeting by September 15th at a time and place designated by the chairperson and made known to the members of the Committee at least five (5) school days in advance. This meeting will be officially noticed as a meeting of the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee. Members will be asked to confirm their willingness to serve the second year of their term, if applicable.
 - a. Prior to the first meeting, committee members will receive a copy of the Educational Materials Selection Policy.
 - b. The Committee at its first meeting will review procedures, District selection policies, previous challenges, and specific procedures for handling challenged materials.
6. Subsequent meetings will be called at the discretion of the chairperson or whenever a formal Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material form – AASD Educational Materials Review Committee is received.
7. In the event of multiple challenges involving different materials, the review committee may appoint a subcommittee of members and/or nonmembers to consolidate challenges and make recommendations to the full committee. The composition of such subcommittees shall approximate the representation of the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee.
8. A request to review materials that have previously been before the committee must receive approval of a majority of the committee members before the materials shall be reconsidered. Requests with less than a two-year lapse will not be considered. Every completed Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material form – AASD Educational Materials Review Committee that is submitted to the District office shall receive a written response from the Superintendent or his/her designee.

D. Review Process

1. The complainant shall be kept informed by the chairperson concerning the status of the review throughout the committee reconsideration process. The complainant and all known interested parties shall be officially noticed using District Open Meeting guidelines.
2. At the first meeting following receipt of a Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material form:
 - a. The Superintendent or his/her designee will prepare and distribute the following:
 - Copies of the written Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material form
 - Copies of the material in question for full review
 - Reputable, professionally prepared reviews of the material if available
 - Appropriate checklist form for fiction or nonfiction material

361.1-Rule (cont.)

- A timeline of events including copies of any communication from previous steps of the review process
- b. The Committee chairperson shall review the procedures and process with the Committee.
- 3. At the second meeting, thorough discussion of the material will be conducted. Interested individuals, including the complainant, will have the opportunity to share their views. The chairperson may request individuals with special knowledge to be present to provide information to the committee. The original complainant will be given up to ten (10) minutes to address the committee, if desired. Other individuals who are residents of the District, parents of children enrolled in the District, or employees of the District and wish to speak at the meeting are required to sign up prior to the scheduled meeting. Each speaker, other than the original complainant, will be given three (3) minutes to speak. This meeting will last no longer than three (3) hours.
- 4. At the second meeting the Committee shall recommend one of the following actions:
 - a. Take no removal action
 - b. Limit the educational use of the material
 - c. Remove all or part of the material from the total school environment
- 5. The written recommendation of the committee and its justification shall be forwarded to the Superintendent, to the complainant, and to the appropriate building principal(s) within five (5) school days of the meeting.

E. Superintendent's Procedure

1. The Superintendent shall review the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee's recommendation. The Superintendent may ratify, amend, or overrule the recommendation of the Review Committee. The Superintendent will provide copies of the Review Committee's recommendation and his/her decision to the complainant within five (5) school days of receipt of the Committee's report.
2. The Superintendent will provide the Board of Education and AASD Educational Materials Review Committee with copies of his/her decision.
3. If the matter reaches the press, the Superintendent or his/her designee will make the response.

F. Appeal Process

If the original complainant is not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, a request may be filed with the Superintendent within ten (10) school days of the date of receipt of the Superintendent's decision to have the matter placed on the agenda of the next scheduled Board of Education meeting. If the appeal request is submitted less than five (5) school days prior to the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the Superintendent may move the matter to the next subsequent regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

361.1-Rule (cont.)

The Board of Education, meeting as a committee of the whole, shall constitute the final step in the appeal process.

1. The Board shall review the documentation accompanying the Request Form as well as the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee minutes and other related Committee materials to determine whether or not procedural and non-discriminatory guidelines outlined in this policy were followed.
2. At its discretion, the Board may elect to conduct interviews with all parties pertinent to the material review process.
3. A decision of the Board with regard to action taken is final.

Cross References: Curriculum Development and Adoption, 330 and 330-Rule Assessment Programs, 346 Assessment, Curriculum, and Instruction Handbook

Legal References: Wisconsin State Statutes 118.03, 118.13, 119.18, 120.13, 120.49, and 121.02

Adoption Date: June 26, 1993

Amended Dates: January 13, 2003 and October 24, 2011

**Appleton Area School District
Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material**

AASD EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS REVIEW COMMITTEE

To request the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee be convened to reconsider an educational material, please complete this form and submit it to the Superintendent of Schools.

Complainant:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Material:

___ Book

___ Audiovisual/Media

___ Magazine

___ Newspaper

___ Other: _____

Title: _____

Author/Producer: _____

1. Did you read/view the material in its entirety? Yes_____ No_____

2. Per the Educational Materials Selection Policy, the initial objection must be discussed with a teacher and principal of the applicable school before being brought to the AASD Educational Materials Review Committee. Did you discuss the use of this material in the instructional program with a teacher and the principal of the applicable school?

Yes_____ No_____

If so, to whom did you speak? _____ When? _____

If so, any additional comments:

3. What do you object to in the educational material? Please be specific.

4. What is the educational benefit for students resulting from the use of this educational material?

5. In your opinion, what negative effects might result from the use of this educational material with students?

6. If you are a parent who requested an alternative educational material for your child, were you offered one by the teacher?

Yes_____ No_____

If so, did you take advantage of the alternative educational material for your child?

Yes_____ No_____

7. For which age group/grade level would you recommend this educational material be used?

8. What is your recommendation to the School District in regard to use of this educational material?

9. During the District review process, do you wish to give a short presentation to the committee relative to your objection?

Yes_____ No_____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appleton Area School District
Check List for Reconsideration of Educational Material
Fiction and Other Literary Forms

Title _____

Author _____

A. Review

1. Does the material appear in one or more reputable review journals?

Yes_____ No_____

2. If yes, please summarize the reviews:

B. Relevance

1. What is the purpose, theme, or message of the material?

2. Is the purpose, theme, or message accomplished? Yes_____ No_____

3. Does the material offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the diversity, aspirations, achievements, and problems of human beings?

Yes_____ No_____

4. Will the reading, viewing of, and/or listening to the material result in a better understanding of human beings?

Yes_____ No_____

C. Content

1. If the material is fantasy, is it the type that has imaginative appeal and is suitable for children/young adults?

Yes_____ No_____

2. If the material is about modern times, does it give a realistic picture of life as it is now?

Yes_____ No_____

3. Do characters speak in a language true to the period and region of the country in which they live?

Yes_____ No_____

4. Is the dialogue a true representation of the age and social group of the characters?
Yes_____ No_____
5. Is the choice of language appropriate to the purpose of the text?
Yes_____ No_____
6. Does the material avoid an oversimplified view of life?
Yes_____ No_____
7. When factual information is part of the material, is it presented accurately?
Yes_____ No_____
8. Does the material give a broader understanding of human behavior?
Yes_____ No_____
9. Is there a gratuitous use of sex, violence, cruelty, brutality, vulgarity and/or aberrant behavior that would make this material inappropriate for children/young adults?
Yes_____ No_____
10. Are the illustrations appropriate to the subject, time period, and/or age level?
Yes_____ No_____
11. Is the material well written or produced?
Yes_____ No_____
12. Does the material make a significant contribution to the history of literature or ideas?
Yes_____ No_____
13. Are concepts presented in the material appropriate to the ability and maturity of the potential readers?
Yes_____ No_____
14. For Board adopted educational materials and textbooks, does the material promote the educational goals and objective of the curriculum?
Yes_____ No_____
15. For Board adopted educational materials and textbooks, is the material appropriate to the level of instruction intended?
Yes_____ No_____

Additional Comments:

Recommendation(s):

Review Committee Signatures:

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Date: _____

**Appleton Area School District
Check List for Reconsideration of Educational Material
Nonfiction**

Title _____

Author _____

A. Review

1. Does the material appear in one or more reputable review journals?

Yes_____ No_____

2. If yes, please summarize the reviews:

B. Relevance

1. What is the overall purpose of the material?

2. Is the purpose accomplished? Yes_____ No_____

C. Content

1. Is the author considered competent and qualified in the field?

Yes_____ No_____

2. What is the reputation and significance of the author and publisher/producer in the field?

3. Is the material current and up-to-date? Yes_____ No_____

4. Are information sources documented? Yes_____ No_____

5. Are translations and retellings faithful to the original? Yes_____ No_____

6. Are the illustrations appropriate to the subject, time period, and/or age level?

Yes_____ No_____

7. Is the content of this material well presented by providing adequate scope, range, depth and continuity?

Yes_____ No_____

8. Does this material give a new dimension or direction to its subject?

Yes_____ No_____

9. Does this material present information not otherwise available?

Yes_____ No_____

10. For Board adopted educational materials and textbooks, does the material promote the educational goals and objective of the curriculum?

Yes_____ No_____

11. For Board adopted educational materials and textbooks, is the material appropriate to the level of instruction intended?

Yes_____ No_____

Additional Comments:

Recommendation(s):

Review Committee Signatures:

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