

Policy

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The Passaic Board of Education believes that textbooks, educational software and other instructional materials shall be aligned with state content standards and the district's curriculum to ensure that they effectively support the district's adopted courses of study. The superintendent shall develop procedures for review of new texts being offered. A list of all approved textbooks shall be revised annually by the superintendent and made available for the use of the professional staff and for the information to the public and board members. Instructional materials used within the district should be sufficient in quantity and scope to meet the needs of every pupil in the district. Textbooks and instructional materials should be judged by additional standards which shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Does the material reflect the district's affirmative action/equity policy, which prohibits the teaching or encouragement of bias based on any categories listed in law or board policy?
- B. Does it help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking?
- C. Does it provide effective basic or advanced education for the students for whom it is intended?

The review process shall:

- A. Be conducted by teaching staff members, particularly those teachers who will be using the materials as an integral part of the instructional program;
- B. Include a written review of the material which shall reflect the consensus of the teaching staff;
- C. Provide an opportunity for public inspection of the recommended text;
- D. Ensure that textbooks with copyright dates more than five years old are reviewed for continuing suitability, continuing usefulness, and relevance;
- E. When it is determined that previously adopted material continues to be appropriate and accurate, the Board of Education's prior approval of material will remain in effect.

The superintendent shall develop administrative rules outlining a procedure for the selection of instructional materials that meets the above criteria. Instructional materials used within the district should be sufficient in quantity and scope to meet the needs of every student in the district.

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The district may pilot instructional materials using a representative sample of classrooms for a specified period of time during a school year in order to determine how well the materials support the district's curricular goals and academic standards.

The board, by law, makes the final textbook selection decision. However, prior to final adoption, the recommendations resulting from each review will be given thorough consideration.

Any citizen who objects to the final selections made by the board should follow the procedures outlined in 6161.2 Complaints Regarding Instructional Materials board policy.

Animal Dissection

Animal dissection is not required and the board, by law, will allow students to refuse to participate in animal dissection to participate in alternative education program.

- A. The board will offer an alternate education program for a course or portion of a course involving dissection of animals;
- B. A public school student from kindergarten through grade 12 may refuse to dissect, vivisection, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction:
- C. "Alternative education project" means the use of video tapes, models, films, books, computers, or any other tools which provide an alternative method for obtaining and testing the knowledge, information, or experience required by a course of study.
- D. "Animal" means any living organism that is an invertebrate, or is in the phylum chordata or organisms which have a notochord and includes an animal's cadaver or severed parts of an animal's cadaver.
- E. The school shall notify students and their parents or guardians at the beginning of each school year of the right to decline to participate in the activities enumerated in "A" of this section and shall authorize parents or guardians to assert the right of their children to refuse to participate in these activities. Exhibit B of this policy provides a copy of such notice. Within two weeks of the receipt of the notice, the students, parents or guardians shall notify the school if the right to decline participation in the enumerated activities will be exercised;

Any student who chooses to refrain from participation in or observation of a portion of a course of instruction in accordance with this section shall be offered an alternative education project for the purpose of providing the student with the factual knowledge, information or experience required by the course of study. A student may refuse to participate in an alternative education project which involves or necessitates any harmful use of an animal, or animal parts;

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A student shall not be discriminated against, in grading or in any other manner, based upon a decision to exercise the rights afforded pursuant to this act.

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Second Reading: November 3, 2016
Adopted: November 3, 2016

Key Words

Evaluation, Instructional Materials, Selection of Instructional Materials, Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 18A:4-25 Prescribing minimum courses of study for public schools; approval of courses of study
N.J.S.A. 18A:33-1 District to furnish suitable facilities; adoption of courses of study
N.J.S.A. 18A:34-1 Textbooks; selection; furnished free with supplies; appropriations
N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 et seq. Curriculum and Courses
N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.25 Districts to provide an alternate to dissection
N.J.A.C. 6A:7-1.4 Responsibilities of the district board of education
N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-20.4 et seq. Ownership and storage of textbooks
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-14.1 Review of mandated programs and services

Comprehensive Equity Plan, State Department of Education

Possible

Cross References: *1312 Community complaints and inquiries
*2224 Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
*5145.4 Equal educational opportunity
6000 Concepts and roles in instruction
*6010 Goals and objectives
*6121 Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
*6140 Curriculum adoption
*6141 Curriculum design/development
*6142.1 Family life education
*6144 Controversial issues
*6161.2 Complaints regarding instructional materials
*6163.1 Media center/library

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.