**Policy Code: 3300 SELECTION AND RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL**

Instructional materials include library materials, and any other type of print or non-print media used in the classroom and/or library to implement the instructional program. "Instructional material" means instructional content that is provided to a student, regardless of format, including printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials and materials in electronic or digital formats, including materials accessible through the Internet. "Instructional material" does not include academic tests or academic assessments.

**A. Selection of Instructional Materials**

1. Philosophy

Instructional materials shall be chosen according to the educational needs and interests of students. Materials shall not be excluded because of the race, nationality, or creed of the author, producer or composer, or because of the ideological, political or religious viewpoint expressed in the material.

Every effort will be made to provide materials that present varying points of view concerning the problems and issues of our time — international, national, and local. Materials of sound authority shall not be prescribed or removed from library shelves because of doctrinal approval or disapproval.

Censorship of material shall be avoided in order to maintain the school's responsibility to provide information and educational enlightenment.

2. Objectives of Selection

In order to assure that the school media program is an integral part of the education program of the school, the following selection objectives are adopted:

a. To provide materials to enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the pupils served.

b. To provide materials to stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.

c. To provide a background of information to enable students to make intelligent judgments and to sharpen their critical evaluation skills.

d. To provide materials presenting all sides of issues so that young citizens may develop the practice of critical analysis of all media.

e. To provide material representative of the diversity of our American heritage.

f. To select material of the highest quality to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users.

g. To provide materials that develop a positive image of men and women free of gender bias.

3. Media/Technology Advisory Committees

Each school shall have in place at all times a building-level Media/Technology Advisory Committee whose responsibility it is to assist the media personnel in the selection process and the school-level challenge of materials. This committee shall be appointed by the principal in consultation with the media coordinator and chaired by the media coordinator. It shall consist of:

**•**   Teachers representative of all school staff

**•**   At least 1 student (at middle and high school levels)

**•**   At least 2 parents

Under the leadership of professional media personnel, this group sets priorities for resources to be acquired based on school wide objectives and on strengths and weaknesses in the existing collection. This committee is also the first level of response to any challenge of resources within the school.

Final decisions for purchase of media materials rest with the professional media personnel with the approval of the school principal.

4. The Selection and Maintenance Process

In selecting instructional materials and maintaining the media collection, school media professionals, assisted by the Media/Technology Advisory Committee will:

a. evaluate the existing collection;

b. assess curricular needs;

c. examine materials;

d. consult reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids;

e. make recommendations to the principal advising purchase of new instructional materials;

f. provide a list upon request (subject to deletions and additions) of supplementary materials to be used in classrooms;

g. judge gift items and classroom collection purchases by standard selection criteria;

h. remove those items that are outdated or no longer relevant to the curriculum; and

i. purchase replacements for worn, damaged or missing resources basic to the collection.

**B. Reconsideration of Instructional Materials**

1. Statement of Principles on Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

Despite the quality of the selection process, the care taken in the process, and the qualifications of persons selecting the resources, occasional objections to instructional materials may be made. The Board of Education supports principles of intellectual freedom inherent in the [First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States](http://redirector.microscribepub.com/?loc=US&cat=const) and expressed in the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association and the Students' Right to Read of the National Council of Teachers of English.

2. Procedure following a Complaint

All complaints to staff members shall be reported to the building principal involved, whether received by telephone, letter, electronic means, or in personal conversation.

a. The principal shall contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and attempt to resolve it informally by explaining the philosophy and goals of the school district and/or the library media center.

b. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the complainant shall be supplied with a packet of materials consisting of the District's instructional goals and objectives, materials selection policy statement and the procedure for handling objections. This packet also will include a standard printed form, which shall be completed and returned before consideration will be given to the complaint.

c. If the formal request for reconsideration has not been received by the principal within two weeks, it shall be considered closed. If the request is returned, the reasons for selection of the specific work shall be reestablished by the appropriate staff.

d. In accordance with statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. However, at the request of the parents making the complaint and pending the outcome of the request for consideration, or at anytime thereafter, access to questioned materials may be denied to the child (or children) of the parents making the complaint.

e. Upon receipt of a completed objection form, the principal in the building involved will convene a committee of five to consider the complaint. This committee shall consist of the curriculum director and these people from the school involved: the principal, the library media center director, a teacher and a parent representative.

f. The committee shall meet to discuss the materials following the guidelines set forth in **Instructions to Reconsideration Committee,** and shall prepare a report on the material containing its recommendations on disposition of the matter.

g. The principal shall notify complainant of the decision and send a formal report and recommendation to the Superintendent. In answering the complainant, the principal shall explain the instructional materials selection system, give the guidelines used for selection and cite authorities used in reaching decisions. If the committee decides to keep the work that caused the complaint, the complainant shall be given an explanation. If the complaint is valid, the principal will acknowledge it and make recommended changes.

h. If the complainant is still not satisfied, he or she may ask the Superintendent to present an appeal to the Board of Education, which shall make a final determination of the issue. The Board of Education may seek assistance from outside organizations such as the American Library Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, etc., in making its determination.

Instructions to Reconsideration Committee

Bear in mind the principles of the **freedom to learn and to read** and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy. Study thoroughly all materials referred to you and read available reviews. The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and local holdings in other schools. Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the materials as a whole. Your report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, will be presented by the principal to the complainant at the conclusion of your discussion of the questioned material.

3. Procedure Following a Challenge to a Building-Level Recommendation

a. Upon receiving a completed REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF BUILDING-LEVEL RECOMMENDATION, the principal shall inform the Superintendent that a formal complaint has been received.

b. The Board of Education, upon notification from the Superintendent that a review of a building-level decision has been requested, may create an Ad Hoc Community Media Advisory Committee if one does not exist. The committee should consist of:

**•** the Superintendent or designee;

**•** the media supervisor;

**•** a media coordinator and/or teacher from each level of school within the system;

**•** a principal from each level of school within the system;

**•** a parent/community member from each level of school within the system;

**•** a parent from the school from which the challenge originates; and

**•** at least 1 high school student.

The chair of this committee should be appointed by the Board of Education.

c. The Ad Hoc Community Media Advisory Committee will re-examine all documentation from the original reconsideration decision and prepare a written report of the findings and recommendation directed to the Superintendent and the Board of Education. Specifically, the members of the committee will:

**•** review the report of the building-level committee;

**•** read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety;

**•** check general acceptance of the material by reading reviews and consulting recommended lists from reputable agencies;

**•** record and consider any statement or explanation requested of the complainant; and

**•** review the objections of the complainant as stated in the Request for Review of the building-level recommendation form.

d. The Board will decide whether to continue using the challenged material based upon the considerations outlined in this policy, the statement of findings by the Ad Hoc Community Media Advisory Committee, and other legitimate educational factors.

e. The Board of Education shall, at all times, have sole authority and discretion to determine whether a challenge has merit and whether challenged materials should be retained or removed.

LEGAL REF: U.S. Const. amend. I; N.C. Const. art. I, § 14; G.S. 115C art. 8 pt. 1; 115C ~~-36~~, -45, -47, -81, -98, -101; *Board of Education v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982); *Impact: Guidelines for North Carolina Media and Technology Programs*, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2005); *The Library Bill of Rights*, The American Library Association (1996)

ADOPTED: August 2, 2004

**Edenton-Chowan Schools**