

Instruction

Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection

It is the practice of the Board of Education to provide educational materials and equipment that support and enrich the curriculum and further the achievement of the district's instructional goals.

The review and selection of basic textbooks (the book or set of instructional materials that serve as the foundation for more than fifty percent of the course content shall be considered the basic textbook, referred to simply as "textbooks") will be carried on continuously in order to keep up with the great expansion of knowledge and the rapid changes going on in our world today.

Where applicable, all textbooks should present balanced views concerning the international, national and local issues and problems of the past, present and future. Textbooks should:

1. Provide materials to stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
2. Provide materials that will help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
3. Provide materials that will develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
4. Provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, or physical disabilities.
5. Allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

The administration will develop and review administrative rules, outlining a procedure to select textbooks which meet the above criteria. This process will include:

1. Analysis, evaluation and recommendation by professional staff and
2. The opportunity for interested citizens in the district to review recommended textbooks.

The Board of Education will make the final textbook selection decision.

The Board of Education shall not change any textbooks used in the public schools except by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the Board. Notice of such intended change shall be given at a meeting of the Board held at least one week prior to the vote on the change.

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Equipment, Books, Materials: Provision/Selection

(cf. 1220 - Citizens' Advisory Committees)
(cf. 1312 -Public Complaints)
(cf. 5145.2 - Freedom of Speech/Expression)
(cf. 6144 - Controversial Issues)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules.

10-222a Boards to have use of funds derived from repayment for school materials.

10-228 Free textbooks, supplies, materials and equipment.

10-229 Change of textbooks.

President's Council District 25 v. Community School Board No. 25, 457 F.2d 289 (1972), cert. denied 409 U.S.C. 998 (Nov. 1972)

Minarcini v. Strongsville City School District, 541 F.2d 577 (6th Cfr. 1976).

Island Trees Union Free School District Board of Education v Pico, 457 US 853 (1982).

Academic Freedom Policy (adopted by Connecticut State Board of Education, 9/9/81).

Regulation approved: October 15, 2007

THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Thomaston, Connecticut

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

General

Instructional materials shall be evaluated consistently and systematically to insure high instructional standards to ensure compliance with Connecticut General Statutes, regulations of the State Board of Education, Board of Education policy and regulations.

These guidelines are not intended to supplant the professional judgment of staff who evaluate instructional materials - both student materials and teacher materials. Instead, they establish minimum standards for acceptability and provide criteria on which to judge instructional quality.

To portray accurately American cultural and racial diversity, and the male and female roles in our society, instructional materials should encourage students to understand the historical roles and contributions of women and minorities, the forces which shaped those roles and contributions, and how and why the contemporary roles and contributions of women and minorities are different.

Limitations

It may be inappropriate to require a pictorial or textual item to conform to these guidelines, for example in reprinting a story by a well-known author or in a painting by an artist which makes an important contribution to a particular instructional material. In such situations, discussion material should have been included which explains why a particular attitude was prevalent during a certain period in history, and how and why that attitude has changed.

When examining instructional material for adverse reflection on race, creed, sex, etc., the evaluator should make a qualitative judgment with respect to stories or articles having historical perspective. Any description, depiction, inference, label, or retort found to be, by itself, an adverse reflection should not be judged out of context. Rather, the story or article should be examined for appropriate explanations, discussions, or other comments included or immediately attached which may overcome the impact of such offending words or pictures. The instructional material should be rejected only if, on a total basis, the story or article would, in the mind of an average student for whom the material is intended, reflect adversely upon a person because of his or her race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex, or occupation.

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Evaluation of Instructional Materials

The purpose of these regulations is to provide consistent, systematic standards for evaluating instructional materials proposed for use in Connecticut's public elementary schools to ensure compliance with the Connecticut General Statutes and with the regulations of the State Board of Education.

Children pattern their interests, prejudices, and ideas after what they see and hear. Children dream of and aspire to those goals they are encouraged to attain. Their world can be expansive and filled with exciting and infinite possibilities, or frustrating in its limitations, depending on their exposure. Much of a child's early development takes place in school, and the potentially positive or negative effect of the school experience is well documented.

These guidelines are not intended to supplant the evaluator's judgment, because it would be impossible to do so. They do comprise the minimum standards for acceptability, and they provide criteria by which to judge quality of instructional materials. The guidelines should be used when evaluating both the student material and the teacher material. In no event should instructions in a teacher manual designed to overcome discriminatory pictures or text in a student edition be given any consideration in evaluation of the student edition.

To portray accurately the cultural and racial diversity and the male and female roles in our society, instructional materials must encourage students to understand not only the historical roles and contributions of women and minorities, but also the forces which shaped those roles and contributions, and how and why the contemporary roles and contributions of women and minorities are different.

Limitations

In certain limited situations it would be inappropriate to require that a pictorial or textual item conform exactly to these guidelines. Such an instance would arise, for example, in reprinting a story by a named author or painting by a named artist which is considered to make an important contribution to a given instructional material. In such a situation, however, discussion material should be included indicating that, for example, a particular attitude toward women or minority groups was prevalent during a certain period in history, and how and why that attitude has changed.

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Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Limitations (continued)

When examining instructional material for adverse reflection on race, creed, sex, etc., the evaluator should make a qualitative judgment with respect to stories or articles having an historical perspective. Any description, depiction, inference, label or retort found to be, by itself, an adverse reflection should not be judged out of context. Rather, the story or article should be examined for appropriate explanations, discussion or other devices included therein, or immediately attached thereto, which may overcome the impact of such offending words or pictures. The instructional material should be rejected only if, on a total basis, the story or article would, in the mind of an average student for whom the material is intended, reflect adversely upon a person because of his or her race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex or occupation.

Materials in a Series

When evaluating instructional materials which are designed to be used as a graded, nongraded or multigraded series, each component thereof shall be judged individually for compliance and without regard to the content of any other component. However, a group or sequence of materials which is designed for use exclusively within a particular single grade shall be judged on a total basis for compliance concerning adverse reflections of one's race, creed, sex, etc. For example, if a package of three different books is designed to be used as fourth grade readers and a student is expected to complete all books in that school year, any portrayal deficiencies found in one book may be balanced against any exemplary portrayal in another book. However, each of the three books must be judged separately for compliance with the adverse reflection prohibitions.

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials

1. Male and Female Roles

To encourage the individual development and self-esteem of each child, regardless of gender, instructional materials, when they portray people (or animals having identifiable human attributes), shall portray women and men, girls and boys, in a wide variety of occupational, emotional, and behavioral situations, presenting both sexes in the full range of their human potential. The criteria are:

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Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

1. Male and Female Roles (continued)

- a. Descriptions, depictions, inferences, labels or retorts which tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize females or males must not appear.
- b. Instructional materials that generally or incidentally reflect contemporary American society, regardless of the subject area, must contain references to, or illustrations of, males and females approximately evenly, except as limited by accuracy.
- c. Mentally and physically active, creative, problem-solving roles, and success and failure in those roles, should be divided approximately evenly between male and female characters.
- d. Emotions of fear, anger, aggression, excitement or tenderness should occur randomly among characters regardless of gender.
- e. Traditional activities engaged in by characters of one sex should be balanced by the presentation of nontraditional activities for characters of that sex.
- f. If professional or executive roles, or vocations, trades or other gainful occupations are portrayed, men and women should be represented approximately equally.
- g. Where life-style choices are discussed, boys and girls should be offered an equally wide range of such aspirations and choices.
- h. Whenever material presents developments in history or current events, or achievements in art, science, or any other field, the contributions of women should be included and discussed when historically accurate.
- i. Imbalance or inequality of any kind, when presented for historical accuracy, should, in the student edition of the instructional material, be interpreted in light of contemporary standards and circumstances.
- j. Sexually neutral language – for example, “people”, “persons”, “men and women”, “pioneers”, “they”, – should generally be used.

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Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

2. Ethnic and Cultural Groups

To project the cultural diversity of our society, instill in each child a sense of pride in his or her heritage, eradicate the seeds of prejudice, and encourage the individual development of each child, instructional materials, when portraying people (or animals having identifiable human attributes), shall include a fair representation of majority and minority group characters portrayed in a wide variety of occupational and behavioral roles, and present the contributions of ethnic and cultural groups, thereby reinforcing the self-esteem and potential of all people and helping the members of minority groups to find their rightful place in our society. The criteria are:

- a. Descriptions, depictions, inferences or labels which tend to demean, stereotype, or to patronize minority groups must not appear.
- b. When diverse ethnic or cultural groups are portrayed, such portrayal should not depict differences in customs or life-style as undesirable and should not reflect an adverse value judgment of such differences.
- c. Instructional materials that generally or incidentally reflect contemporary American society, regardless of the subject area, must contain references to, or illustrations of, a fair proportion of diverse ethnic groups.
- d. Mentally active, creative, and problem-solving roles, and success and failure in those roles, should be divided in fair proportion between majority and minority group characters.
- e. The portrayal of minority characters in roles to which they have been traditionally restricted by society should be balanced by the presentation of nontraditional activities for characters of that race.
- f. Minority persons should be depicted in the same range of socioeconomic settings as persons of the majority group.
- g. Depiction of diverse ethnic and cultural groups should not be limited to the root culture, but rather expanded to include such groups within the mainstream of American life.

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Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

2. Ethnic and Cultural Groups (continued)

- h. If professional or executive roles, or vocations, trades or other gainful occupations are portrayed, majority and minority groups should be presented therein in fair proportion.
- i. Whenever developments in history or current events, or achievements in art, science, or any other field are presented, the contributions of minority peoples, and particularly the identification of prominent minority persons should be included and discussed when historically accurate.
- j. Imbalance or inequality of any kind, when presented for historical accuracy, should, in the student edition of the instructional materials, be interpreted in light of contemporary standards and circumstances.

3. Entrepreneur and Labor

The criteria are:

- a. References or labels which tend to demean, stereotype, or patronize an occupation, vocation, or livelihood must not appear.
- b. Where appropriate, reference should be made to the role and contribution of the entrepreneur in the total development of Connecticut and the United States, and any such reference should be accurate.
- c. Where appropriate, reference should be made to the role and contribution of labor in the total development of Connecticut and the United States, and any such reference should be accurate.

4. Ecology and Environment

The criteria are:

- a. Responsibilities of human beings toward a healthy, sanitary environment are appropriately portrayed.
- b. Wise use of resources, both human and physical, is actively encouraged.

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Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

4. Ecology and Environment (continued)

- c. Interdependence of people and their environment is portrayed.
- d. The effects of solutions to environmental problems are identified.
- e. Appropriate means of protecting the environment are suggested.

5. Dangerous Substances

The criteria are:

- a. The hazards of the use of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, and restricted dangerous drugs are depicted in illustrations or discussions where references to these substances are included in instructional materials.
- b. The use of tobacco, alcohol, narcotics, or restricted dangerous drugs is not glamorized or encouraged by illustrations or discussion references.

6. Religion

The criteria are:

- a. No religious belief or practice shall be held up to ridicule nor any religious group portrayed as inferior or superior.
- b. Portrayals of contemporary American society should, where religion is discussed or depicted, reflect its religious diversity. Except where material deals with a particular historical era, materials in art and music must, where religious aspects thereof are depicted, reflect the religious diversity of contemporary American society.
- c. Any explanation or description of a religious belief or practice shall be presented in a manner which neither encourages nor discourages belief in the matter, nor indoctrinates the student in any particular religious belief, nor otherwise instructs students in religious principles.

Instruction

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Specific Criteria for Evaluation of Instructional Materials (continued)

7. Food

The criterion is:

When instructional materials contain illustrations of foods, there shall be an emphasis on foods of high nutritional value.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-18a Contents of textbooks and other general instructional materials.

Instruction

Care of Instructional Materials

Damaged or Lost Instructional Materials

The Board of Education may impose sanctions against students who lose or damage textbooks and other educational materials. The Superintendent is authorized by the Board to set regulations and adopt any guidelines necessary to carry out the wishes of the Board.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221(c) Boards of education to prescribe rules.

10-222a Boards to have use of funds derived from repayment for school materials.

Policy adopted: November 19, 2007

THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Thomaston, Connecticut

Instruction

Care of Instructional Materials

Library books, textbooks, and other educational materials are loaned to the students for their use, and shall be returned when requested by school authorities. Students must pay the current value of any book or educational material lost or damaged beyond ordinary wear.

Teachers shall insure that students take proper care of books. Students shall enter their name and other information on the book plate. If a student loses his or her book during the school year, the teacher should issue another book to the student. At the end of the school year the student is obligated to hand in both books or one book and the price of the lost book or books. If a student loses two books during the school year from any teacher, the teacher shall notify the parents before the third book is issued.

Students who fail promptly to return or pay for texts and materials may have grades, transcripts or report cards withheld until restitution is made.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221(c) Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.

10-222a Boards to have use of funds derived from repayment for school materials.

Instruction

Comparability of Services

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall pursue funding under Title I of the Federal Strengthening and Improving of Elementary and Secondary Schools Act to supplement instructional services and activities in order to improve the educational opportunities of educationally disadvantaged or deprived children.

All District schools, regardless of whether they receive Title I funds, shall provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Teachers, administrators and other staff shall be assigned to schools in a manner that ensures equivalency among the District's schools. Curriculum materials and instructional supplies shall be provided in a manner that ensures equivalency among the District's schools.

The Board of Education believes that at all times its schools should be equally as well equipped and maintained as may be possible within existing financial limitations.

It shall be the policy of the Board of Education to insure comparability of services funded by state and local sources in both Title I project schools and non-project schools. the Board of Education will therefore:

1. Maintain a district-wide salary schedule.
2. Provide services with federal, state and local funds in schools serving Title I project areas that are at least comparable to services in non-project areas.
3. Use federal, state and local funds to provide for an equivalence among all schools in all schools with the same grade levels in teachers, administrators, auxiliary personnel.
4. Use federal, state and local funds to provide for an equivalence among all schools with the same grade levels in the provision of curriculum and instructional materials, books and supplies.
5. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the administration from addressing identified problems at individual schools.

Legal Reference: Title I of the Strengthening and Improving of Elementary and Secondary Schools Act, 20 U.S.C.A. §6301-6514, as implemented by 34 C.F.R. parts 200, 201, 203, 205, and 212.

Agostini v. Felton 521 U.S. 103 (1997)

Policy adopted: November 19, 2007

THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Thomaston, Connecticut

Instruction

Use of Proprietary Software Products

It is the intent of the Board of Education to adhere to the provisions of copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code) and publishers' license agreements, including trade secret provisions, in the area of proprietary software products. (Proprietary products are those made or marketed by persons having exclusive manufacturing and sales rights, who may or may not be the copyright holders.) Therefore, persons may use or cause to be used on school system computing equipment only software that is included in one of the following categories:

- A. Public domain (i.e., uncopyrighted) software.
- B. Software covered by a licensing agreement with the software author, authors, vendor, or developer, whichever is applicable (a licensing agreement is a legal contract authorizing use of the software).
- C. Software purchased by a school or school system, with a record of the purchase on file.
- D. Software purchased by the user, with a record of purchase available for verification.
- E. Software donated officially accepted by the Board.
- F. Software being reviewed or demonstrated by the users in order to reach a decision about possible future purchase, license, or acceptance of a donation.
- G. Software written or developed by an employee for use by the schools or to assist in training school district personnel.
- H. Software developed by a non-employee under contract to the school system for use by the school system or to assist in training school district personnel.

In addition, none of the software in the categories listed above may be used or obtained in violation of copyright law or licensing agreements.

Licensing agreements or other forms of documentation covering software shall be kept on file at the location where the computer program is used.