

## INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL SELECTION

## PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT CURRICULUM OR INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

## I. GUIDELINES FOR MATERIAL SELECTION

It is the policy of the Lincoln Public Schools to establish procedures in the selection and approval of books and audio-visual equipment which will:

- A. Support and enrich all subjects of the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served.
- B. Present in fair perspective the culture, history, activities and contributions of persons and groups of different races, nationalities, sexes, religions and ethnic origins.
- C. Give extensive information and factual knowledge which will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
- D. Support and be consistent with the objectives and goals of specific courses of study approved by the School Committee.
- E. Stimulate growth in knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
- F. Present aspects of social, economic, and political systems and issues so that students have practice, under guidance, in the processes of critical reading, thinking and evaluating.
- G. Offer the student an opportunity to develop an awareness of a social order which allows for the full development of the individual.
- H. Develop the life-long habit of wide reading which fosters freedom in the exchange of ideas.

## II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

The purchase of instructional materials is legally vested in the School Committee. The Committee delegates to the staff the actual selection of materials. The staff chooses materials geared to the needs and interests of the student and faculty.

## III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

- A. Criteria for the selection of materials consistent with the guidelines for materials and selection noted above should be based on the needs of the school, as determined from a knowledge of children.

- B. Suitable materials are selected according to grade and level of interest.
- C. A wide range of materials is provided for all levels of ability with a diversity of appeal and presentation of different points of view.
- D. Factual accuracy, authoritativeness, balance and integrity are required in the materials provided.
- E. Materials of high quality and superior format are chosen with consideration given to stimulating presentation, including imagination, vision, creativity, and style appropriate to the idea.

#### IV. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING OBJECTIONS

- A. The suitability of particular books or other materials may be questioned by any parent, student, or citizen of the Lincoln or Hanscom communities. A Request Form for Re-evaluation of Materials is available at the Principals' offices. This form should be completed by the complainant and presented to the Principal who will forward a copy to the Superintendent.
- B. The material in question shall be reviewed by a committee composed of:
  - Principal
  - Subject teacher at the appropriate level
  - Parent representative(s) appointed by the appropriate parent group. On the Lincoln campus, this would be the PTA or METCO; on the Hanscom campus, this would be the Hanscom Parent Organization or the Hanscom Representatives to the School Committee.
  - Librarian

The review committee shall function at the call of the Principal upon receipt of a complaint. The material shall be considered with the specific objections in mind. The complainant shall have the opportunity to meet with the review committee as shall any other persons involved in the selection or use of the questioned material. The review committee shall endeavor to arrive at a decision as rapidly as possible and shall transmit its decision, including minority reports if any, to all interested parties. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the review committee, he/she may ask for School Committee consideration of the matter. The School Committee's decision will be final.

- C. The staff shall have no obligation to remove material from use during the review process.
- D. The review of questioned materials shall be treated objectively and as an important matter. The best interests of the students, curriculum, the school and the community shall be of paramount importance.

V. INSTRUCTIONS TO EVALUATING COMMITTEE

- A. Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to learn and to read and base your decisions on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual material. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.
- B. 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 the collections in other schools.
- C. 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 material as a whole.
- D. Your report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, will be presented to the Superintendent who will forward it to the School Committee for possible action.

See Also: Intellectual Freedom Documents of the American Library Association and The Student's Right to Read from the National Council of Teachers of English. (Both filed under "Reports" - Material Selection)

Approved at School Committee Meeting of August 17, 1979

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of February 11, 1985