

## **606 Textbooks And Instructional Materials**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for selection of textbooks and instructional materials, and the study of controversial issues.

### **II. General Statement of Policy**

The School Board recognizes that selection of textbooks and instructional materials is a vital component of the district's curriculum. The School Board also recognizes that it has the authority and responsibility to make final decisions regarding the selection of textbooks and instructional materials, and the study of controversial issues.

### **III. Responsibility of Selection**

- A. While the School Board retains its authority to make final decisions, it also recognizes the expertise of the professional staff and the vital need of such staff to be primarily involved in such decisions. Accordingly, the School Board delegates to the superintendent the responsibility to direct the professional staff in formulating recommendations to the School Board regarding the selection of textbooks and instructional materials, and the study of controversial issues.
- B. The superintendent shall be responsible for developing procedures and guidelines to establish an orderly process for the review and recommendation of textbooks and other instructional materials by the professional staff. Such procedures and guidelines shall provide opportunity for input and consideration of the views of students, parents, and other interested members of the school district community. This procedure shall be coordinated with the school district's curriculum development effort and may utilize advisory committees.

### **IV. Selection of Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials**

- A. In reviewing textbooks and instructional materials during the selection process, the professional staff shall select materials which:
  - 1. support the goals and objectives of the education programs;
  - 2. consider the needs, age, and maturity of students;
  - 3. foster respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and varied opinion;

4. fit within the constraints of the school district budget;
  5. are in the English language. Another language may be used, pursuant to Minnesota state statute.
  6. permit grade-level instruction for students to read and study America's founding documents, including documents that contributed to the foundation or maintenance of America's representative form of limited government, the Bill of Rights, our free-market economic system, and patriotism; and
  7. do not censor or restrain instruction in American or Minnesota state history or heritage based on religious references in original source documents, writings, speeches, proclamations, or records.
- B. The superintendent shall be responsible for keeping the School Board informed of progress on the part of staff and others involved in the textbook and other instructional materials review and selection process.
- C. The superintendent shall present a recommendation to the School Board on the selection of textbooks and other instructional materials after completion of the review process as outlined in this policy.

## **V. Study of Controversial Issues**

- A. The nature of controversy is such that reasonable people may disagree. It shall be the policy of the district to foster dispassionate, unprejudiced, scholarly studies of controversial issues in an atmosphere free from bias and prejudice.
- B. Students shall have the right:
1. to study any issue in accordance with their maturity level;
  2. of free access to all relevant materials including those which circulate freely in the community, in accordance with their maturity level;
  3. to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere free from partisanship;
  4. to express their opinions on controversial issues without jeopardizing their relationships with teachers and other school staff.
- C. Controversial topics selected for study in the classroom should:

1. contribute toward helping students develop techniques for examining other controversial issues;
  2. be suitable for students of the maturity and background represented in the class;
  3. be related to the course content and help achieve course objectives;
  4. be of continuing significance.
- D. The teacher shall serve as an impartial moderator and shall not attempt either directly or indirectly to limit or control the judgment of pupils on controversial issues. It is the intent of this policy that the teacher shall foster the study of such issues rather than teach a particular viewpoint in regard to them. Teachers who conduct study and discussion according to the intent of this policy will be protected by the School Board from unjust charges and attack by every means at its disposal, including legal.

## **VI. Family Life and Sex Education**

- A. The family is the fundamental unit of our society. Parents and schools each have an important role in family life and sex education.
- B. Parents have the primary responsibility for helping children to develop an understanding of how to be effective members of a family as children, adolescents and adults, including how to practice responsible sexual behavior.
- C. The district, in recognizing that parents' views regarding family and sex education may differ, will make a reasonable effort to inform parents about potentially controversial materials and activities before the beginning of the program.
- D. Parents and adult students may request alternative teaching materials and activities if they so choose.

## **VII. Objections to Textbooks or Other Instructional Materials**

- A. The School Board recognizes differences of opinion on the part of some members of the school district community relating to certain areas of the instruction program.
- B. Interested persons may request an opportunity to review materials and submit a written request for reconsideration of the use of certain textbooks or instructional materials.
- C. If a parent or adult student objects to specific instructional material, school staff will make reasonable arrangements for alternative instruction.

- D. Parents or adult students may provide alternative instruction if the alternative offered by the school does not meet their concerns. The district shall not pay the costs of alternative instruction provided by parents or adult students.
- E. School staff shall not impose a penalty, academic or otherwise, upon students seeking alternative instruction. School staff shall evaluate and assess the quality of the student's work using alternative instruction.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 9 (Compulsory Instruction – Curriculum)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.235 (American Heritage Education)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.02, Subd. 2 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)  
Minn. Stat. § 123B.09, Subd. 8 (School Board Responsibilities)  
Minn. Stat. § 124D.59-124D.61 (Limited English Proficiency)  
Minn. Stat. § 127A.10 (State Officials and School Board Members to be Disinterested; Penalty)  
*Hazelwood Sch. Dist. v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S.Ct. 562, 98 L.Ed.2d 592 (1988)  
*Pratt v. Independent Sch. Dist. No. 831*, 670 F.2d 771 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1982)

**Cross References:** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 603 (Curriculum Development)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 604 (Instructional Curriculum)

**School Board Action:**  
Adopted as Policy 9.136 February 16, 1999  
Adopted as Policy 9.138 February 16, 1999  
Adopted as Policy 9.139 February 16, 1999  
Adopted as Policy 9.140 February 16, 1999  
Revised as Policy 606 June 17, 2008