

## **606.5 LIBRARY MATERIALS**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and to delegate responsibility for selection and reconsideration of library materials.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The school board recognizes that library materials serve as a vital component of a student's education by enriching the breadth of the curriculum as a whole and meeting the needs and interests of individual students. The purpose of library materials is to meet the needs of all students. Therefore, questions regarding selection and reconsideration of library materials should be handled differently than those concerning textbooks and instructional materials.

To ensure that library materials fulfill this role, the school board delegates to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee responsibility for administering a process for selection of library materials in all formats. Responsibility for selection shall rest with professionally trained school district staff, with recognition that the school board has the final authority on selection of library materials. Responsibility for actual selection rests with the professionally trained library personnel using the board's adopted selection criteria and procedures. Parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's access to library materials.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. "Library" is the school district resource that holds the library collection that serves the information and independent reading needs of students and supports the curriculum needs of teachers and staff. The term "library" includes a school library media center. The term also includes access to electronic materials.

For school districts with multiple school buildings, the term "library" refers to the resource within a specific school building.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.991, states that a school district or charter school library or school library media center provides equitable and free access to students, teachers, and administrators and that a school library or school library media center must have the following characteristics:

1. ensures every student has equitable access to resources and is able to locate, access, and use resources that are organized and cataloged;
2. has a collection development plan that includes but is not limited to materials selection and deselection, a challenged materials procedure, and an intellectual and academic freedom statement;
3. is housed in a central location that provides an environment for expanded learning and supports a variety of student interests;
4. has technology and Internet access; and
5. is served by a licensed school library media specialist or licensed school librarian.

- B. "Library collection" consists of the library materials made available to students.

- C. "Library materials" are the books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, prints, documents, videotapes,

subscription content, electronic and digital materials (including e-books, audiobooks, and databases), and related items made available to students in a school building or through access to electronic materials This term does not include materials made available to students as part of the curriculum.

- D. “Library media specialist” is a teacher holding a Library Media Specialist teaching license issued by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Boards and who is trained to deliver library services to students and staff in a library. A library media specialist is authorized under Minnesota Rules to provide to students in kindergarten through grade 12 instruction that is designed to provide information and technology literacy skills instruction, to lead, collaborate, and consult with other classroom teachers for the purpose of integrating information and technology literacy skills with content teaching, and to administer media center operations, programming, and resources.

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

##### **1. Support for Intellectual Freedom**

The school libraries of this district are guided by the principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretative statements, including “Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program” and The Students’ Right to Read statement of the National Council of Teachers of English. See Appendix (in this policy) for the Library Bill of Rights, “Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program,” and The Students’ Right to Read statement.

##### **2. Objectives**

- To provide faculty and students with materials that enrich and support the curriculum and meet the needs of the students and faculty served
- To provide students with a wide range of educational materials on all levels of difficulty and in a variety of formats, with diversity of appeal, allowing for the presentation of many different points of view
- To select materials that present various sides of controversial issues, giving students an opportunity to develop analytical skills resulting in informed decisions
- To select materials in all formats, including up-to-date, high quality, varied literature to develop and strengthen a love of reading

##### **3. Responsibility for Selection**

The elected Board of Education shall delegate to the superintendent of schools or district administrator the authority and responsibility for selection of library materials in all formats. Responsibility for actual selection rests with professionally trained library personnel using the board’s adopted selection criteria and procedures.

##### **4. Selection Criteria**

General Criteria:

- Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students’ personal interests and learning
- Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format
- Be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected
- Incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources
- Earn favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
- Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest

- Represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues
- Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures
- Include a variety of resources in physical and virtual formats including print and non-print such as electronic and multimedia (including subscription databases and other online products, e-books, educational games, and other forms of emerging technologies)
- Demonstrate physical format, appearance, and durability suitable to their intended use
- Balance cost with need

Top Four Recommended School Library Reviewing Sources:

- Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Notable Children's Books
- Booklist
- School Library Journal
- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults

## 5. Acquisition Procedures

- In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible.
- Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, students, district personnel, and community members, as appropriate.
- Gift materials shall be judged by the selection criteria and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.
- Selection is an ongoing process that should include removing materials that are no longer used or needed, adding materials, and replacing lost and worn materials that still have educational value.

## 6. Selection of Materials on Controversial Subjects

The school board subscribes to the principles expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. It is the responsibility of the school district to provide a wide range of materials on different levels of difficulty and representing different points of view. School library professional staff will provide materials on opposing viewpoints on controversial issues to enable students to develop necessary critical thinking skills to be discriminate users of information and productive members of society.

## 7. Gifts and Donations

Gifts and donations to the school library are accepted with the understanding that the decision for use and disposition of the materials and/or funds will be determined using the same selection criteria as purchased materials. All materials should support the curriculum and needs of library users. Gifts and donations, like purchased resources, will be removed from the collection at the end of their useful life.

## 8. Collection Maintenance and Weeding

Annually, the school librarian will conduct an inventory of the school library collection and equipment. The inventory can be used to determine losses and remove damaged or worn materials which can then be considered for replacement. The inventory can also be used to deselect and remove materials that are no longer relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students. Additionally, school librarians should develop a collection maintenance plan that includes systematic inspection of materials that would result in weeding outdated, damaged, or irrelevant materials from the collection.

**V. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ACCESS TO SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL**

A parent or guardian may request that access to specific material in the library materials collection be restricted from their student. The school shall take reasonable steps to fulfill this request. This type of request will not result in removal of specific library collection material from the library or restrictions upon any other student accessing specific library materials.

**VI. RECONSIDERATION OF SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL**

- A. The school board seeks to uphold students' access to library materials that meet the educational goals and selection criteria set forth in this policy.
- B. A school district employee, student, or a parent or guardian of a school district student may request reconsideration of specific library material on the basis of appropriateness. Access to the material in question shall not be restricted until the procedures listed below have been fully completed and a decision to remove or restrict the materials has been made.

**[NOTE: The school board may decide whether to allow a building principal to remove library materials pending completion of the reconsideration process.]**

- C. Informal Request for Reconsideration of Specific Library Material
  - 1. Requests for reconsideration of specific library material shall be directed to the library media specialist and the building principal. The building principal and the library media specialist shall assume responsibility for processing the request on an informal basis.
  - 2. The building principal and/or the library media specialist shall provide an explanation to the individual who submitted the request. The explanation shall include the particular selection criteria that the material in question met in order to be included in the library as curriculum support or as an independent reading choice for students in the building. A questioned item will be considered in its entirety, not judged solely on portions taken out of context.
  - 3. If the request is not resolved informally, the principal shall submit a report on the matter to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee. The requestor will have an option to initiate a Formal Request for Reconsideration.

**D. Formal Request for Reconsideration of Specific Library**

The following procedures should be followed if, after discussing the questioned resource, no resolution is made.

- 1. The complainant should be referred to the principal.
- 2. A concerned citizen who is dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be offered a packet of materials which includes the library's mission statement, selection policy, and request for reconsideration of instructional resources form.
- 3. The complainant is required to complete and submit the reconsideration form to the principal within ten business days.
- 4. If a completed reconsideration form is not submitted within ten business days, the matter is considered closed.
- 5. Upon receipt of the form, the principal should notify and provide a copy of the reconsideration form with the following individuals:

- a. Superintendent
- b. Reconsideration Committee
- c. School librarian

6. The work in question will remain on library shelves and in circulation until a formal decision is made.
7. The Reconsideration Committee will be appointed by the principal and consist of a teacher, a building level administrator, a school librarian, a language arts teacher, and member(s) of the community. Makeup of the committee varies depending on the school district.
8. The school librarian will secure copies of the resource for the committee to review.
9. The school librarian will provide the reviewing committee with a short formal training that explains a packet of materials, which includes the library's mission statement, selection policy, the Library Bill of Rights, the completed reconsideration form, reviews of the resource being reconsidered, and a list of awards or honors, if any.
10. Through interlibrary loan or other means, the school librarian will obtain copies of the material in question for review by the Reconsideration Committee.
11. The Reconsideration Committee (which should include the school librarian) should schedule a formal reconsideration meeting within 10 school days after the principal receives the written request for reconsideration.
12. The Reconsideration Committee should follow the procedures listed below:

- a. At the initial meeting, the principal and committee will review reconsideration committee guidelines and procedures. A school administrator should fully participate in the reconsideration process.
- b. A member of the committee should keep minutes.
- c. All committee members should fully review the resource (read or view the entire work) before voting.
- d. The committee reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision-making process.
- e. The complainant may make an initial verbal presentation about the resource under reconsideration or may choose to share the written form. The complainant is asked to provide sources for quotes used during this presentation.
- f. The complainant may not participate in or observe the committee's deliberations unless invited to do so by the committee. The committee chair may choose to give committee members time to ask questions.
- g. During the initial or subsequent meetings, the committee will make its decision determined by the simple majority to retain, move the resources to a different level, or remove the resource. This will be a secret ballot vote.
- h. The committee's written decision (including a minority report if needed) shall be presented to the complainant, the superintendent of schools, and the school library department director within five school days after the decision is made.

## **VII. CHALLENGE REPORT**

Upon the completion of a content challenge or reconsideration process in accordance with this policy, the school board must submit a report of the challenge to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education that includes:

- A. the title, author, and other relevant identifying information about the material being challenged;
- B. the date, time, and location of any public hearing held on the challenge in question, including minutes or transcripts;
- C. the result of the challenge or reconsideration request; and
- D. accurate and timely information on who from the school district the Department of Education may contact with questions or follow-up.

**[NOTE: This article was enacted in 2024 by the Minnesota legislature.]**

## **VIII. PROHIBITION ON RETALIATION**

The school district may not discriminate against or discipline an employee for complying with Minnesota Statutes, section 134.51.

**[NOTE: This article was enacted in 2024 by the Minnesota legislature.]**

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 9 (Compulsory Instruction)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.02 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (School Board Responsibilities)

Minn. Stat. § 124D.991 (Public School Libraries and Media Centers)

Minn. Stat. § 134.51 (Access to Library Materials and Rights Protected)

Minn. Rules Part 8710.4550 (Library Media Specialists)

*Bd. of Educ., Island Trees Union Free Sch. Dist. No. 26 v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982)

*Virginia State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624, 642 (1943)

**Cross References:** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 606 (Textbooks and Instructional Materials)

## RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIAL FORM

The school board of Sleepy Eye Public District 84 School District, has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library/educational resources to the school library professional staff and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of school or library resources, please return the completed form to the coordinator of library media resources (or principal).

Sleepy Eye Public District 84 School District  
400 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Sleepy Eye MN 56085

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent self? \_\_\_\_ Or an organization? \_\_\_\_ Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_ Book (e-book) \_\_\_\_ Movie \_\_\_\_ Magazine \_\_\_\_ Database

\_\_\_\_ Audio Recording \_\_\_\_ Digital Resource \_\_\_\_ Textbook \_\_\_\_ App

\_\_\_\_ Newspaper \_\_\_\_ Game \_\_\_\_ Streaming Media \_\_\_\_ Other

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

Is the resource part of the curriculum, library collection, or other?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What concerns you about the resource?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?

\_\_\_\_\_

## GUIDELINES FOR RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEES

Under the best professional standards, reconsideration policies ask those charged with reviewing a challenged book or other resource to set aside their personal beliefs and evaluate the work in light of the objective standards outlined in the library's materials selection policy. Listed below are some best practices for Reconsideration Committee members:

- Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than in defense of individual materials. Based in the First Amendment, the freedom to read is essential to our democracy.
- Read or view all materials referred to you including the full text of the material in question, available reviews, and notices of awards, if applicable.
- Review the library mission statement, materials selection and reconsideration policies, and professional guides such as the Intellectual Freedom Manual.
- The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and your institution's selection policies.
- Challenged materials should not be removed from the collection while under reconsideration.
- Passages or parts of the work in question 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.
- In order to prevent a tie vote, the library director (public and academic libraries) or principal (school libraries) should recruit an odd number of members for the committee.
- While it may be prudent to state what area/role a committee member represents in the makeup of the committee (ie, teacher, librarian, community member, administration, parent, etc), the personal identification of each member should remain anonymous to protect the objectivity of the deliberation.
- The reconsideration committee meeting may be closed depending on state law and local practice. While public comments may be useful, these comments should be directed to the principal, director or governing body.
- The committee's recommendation is to be an objective evaluation of the material within the scope of a library's selection policy.
- The committee's report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, should be presented to the governing body or administrator, as directed in the reconsideration process, with a recommendation to retain the material in its original location, to relocate the material, or to remove the material. The report may differ depending on the type of resource that is being challenged, such as library material, display, curriculum, reading list etc.
- Establish a procedure for communicating the committee's recommendation to the governing body or administrator and to the person who made the formal reconsideration request. For example, the committee communicates its decision to the director or principal, who then communicates the decision to the person who make the challenge as well as to the institution's governing board.



## RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

Has every member of the committee read the material entirely? If not, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

Resources consulted: (include policies, articles, reviews etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Reconsideration committee recommends:

\_\_\_\_\_

Justification and comments: (include majority and minority positions)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of Reconsideration Committee Members:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Note: This report is forwarded to:

\_\_\_\_\_