

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

POLICY FOR SELECTION AND RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

I. Definitions of Instructional materials

- A. Instructional materials include specific books assigned for use by the whole class or small groups.
- B. Other instructional materials are resources available for general use by groups of students, or individual students, and include but are not limited to: reference books, periodicals and newspapers for general use, films and videos, recordings, exhibits, charts, maps, globes and other visual aids, television materials, electronic media, such as computer software and invited speakers or performers.

II. Objectives of Selection

The primary objective of the school's instructional materials selection policy is to implement, enrich and support the educational program of the school. It is the duty of the school to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and presentation of different points of view.

The Board of Trustees of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter School asserts that the responsibility of the professional staff is:

To provide materials and information that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served.

To provide materials and information that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.

To provide a background which will enable pupils to make intelligent judgments in their daily life.

To provide nondiscriminatory materials and information on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical analysis.

To provide materials and information representative of varied religious, ethnic, and cultural groups, and their contributions to our American heritage.

To promote principal above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure access to a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users.

III. Procedure for Selection

In selecting materials for use, staff members will evaluate the materials based on their professional expertise, and may consult reputable balanced critical reviews and/or consult educational specialists and/or educational professionals employed by the school. With materials used for group instruction, school staff will pay particular attention to the experience and sensitivity of their students as they plan introductory and follow-up activities. Commercially-released films, videos and software will be evaluated by the selection criteria in Section VI. and not by industry-sponsored ratings.

IV. Parent/School Communication

At the beginning of each school year, the school will notify parents of the instructional materials selection policy via handout or as part of the parent handbook, or both.

Teachers will notify parents at least one week in advance of assigning any book for reading or media for viewing by the whole class. Teachers should provide a brief summary of the content of the material. At least one week before requiring ALL students to read a specific book or view a specific film/video, teachers are to notify parents of their intentions. This does not include “read aloud” books unless, in the judgement of the teacher, the material contains controversial content, descriptions of violence, obscene or inappropriate language, or sexual content that may be inappropriate for some of their students.

V. Teacher/Student Communication

Teachers shall make every effort to be aware of and respond to the sensitivities of students when selecting books or other media. Teachers should prepare students in advance of reading or viewing any material that might be controversial, offensive or disturbing.

VI. Challenging Selected Materials

The procedure for handling objections to assigned instructional materials is as follows:

- A. Parents and others with concerns about specific kinds of materials are encouraged to first discuss these concerns with teachers.
- B. If parents and others then feel their concerns are not being addressed, they may complete the Request for Reconsideration of Assigned Instructional Material which should be presented to the Education Coordinator who will review all concerns.

The Education Coordinator will:

1. Carefully read/view the materials and reflect on their appropriateness and educational value.
2. Check general acceptance of the materials by reading reviews and/or literary criticism and may consult with staff and/or community members with related professional knowledge.
3. Reexamine the materials in light of “VII. Criteria for Selection of Instructional Materials.”
4. Weigh values and faults, decide on acceptability based on the materials as a whole and not on passages pulled out of context.
5. Consider any request by the person making the inquiry to present his/her concerns in person.
6. Issue a decision within 10 school days of receiving the concern.
7. Forward a copy of the decision to the person making the inquiry, to any teacher involved, and the Board of Trustees.

- C. If not satisfied with the decision of the Education Coordinator, parents and others may enter into the school's official grievance procedure administered by the Board of Trustees.

Challenged materials will not be assigned to the child of the parent(s) objecting to the material until the challenge is resolved. Teachers are encouraged to use the opportunity of such challenges to sensitively promote classroom discussion of varying points of view.

Parents objecting to the use of the materials may request that alternative materials be provided for their child/children until the issue has been resolved using the process described above. The teacher will then provide alternative materials or activities. However, parents must understand that their child will not be receiving the benefits of the planned lessons and discussions in which the rest of the class is participating, and may not receive the same level of instruction in terms of comprehension skills and familiarity with literary/media analysis.

VII. Criteria for Selection of instructional Materials

Teachers are responsible for using the following criteria in the selection of both assigned and other instructional materials as defined in section I.

1. The materials support and enrich the curriculum and the school's educational competencies established for the age group.
2. The materials are developmentally appropriate to the maturity level of the students who will use them.
3. In the case of controversial issues, the materials present opposing sides of view in an equitable manner, or will be used by the teacher as examples of a limited and biased point of view.
4. The materials

HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER SCHOOL

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF ASSIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

Request initiated by_____

Phone_____Email _____ Street address_____

City_____State_____Zip Code_____

Complaint Represents:

_____Self _____Organization/Group: _____

Relationship to student and/or school_____

Title of material to be reconsidered_____

Type of material (book, video, software, etc.)_____

Author(s), if available_____

Publisher, if available_____

1. To what in the material do you object? (Please be specific, cite words, pages and nature of content)_____

2. Why do you object to this material?_____

3. For what age group would you recommend this material?_____

4. Is there anything good about this material?_____

5. Did you read, view, or listen to entire material?_____

What parts?_____

6. Are you aware of the reviews written about this material?_____

7. What would you like the school to do about this material?

_____do not assign it to my child

_____withdraw it from all students

_____have it reevaluated by professionally trained personnel

_____other:_____

8. In it's place, what material would you recommend?_____

Should you object to the decision of the Education Coordinator, you may choose to enter into the school's grievance process administered by the Board of Trustees.

Date

Signature(s) of Complainant(s)

Date

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