1. Statement of Philosophy:

Public education in a democracy is committed to facilitate the educational growth and equal educational opportunity of all students. The freedom to learn and the corresponding freedom to teach are basic to a democratic society.

Therefore, the policy of the Sitka Board of Education is to provide a wide range of learning resources at varying levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view, to meet the needs of students and teachers.

The responsibility for all instructional materials is legally vested in the Sitka School Board of Education which delegates to the professionals, who know the curricula, the students and the philosophy of the school system, the responsibility for final selection. Differences of public opinion with respect to the subject-matter and content of education resources are respected; however, once such materials have been selected in accordance with this policy, official censorship or removal of such materials, based solely on objections to their subject matter or content, may only occur under the terms of, Procedure for Handling Reconsideration of Educational Materials and relevant administrative procedural regulations.

Definition: Instructional materials include but are not limited to: textbooks, teacher’s manuals, kits, games, compact disks (CDs), videodisks, computer software, apparatus, media collection of library books, films, filmstrips, records, tapes, slides, microfilms and other print, and non-print materials

2. Objectives of Resource Selection:

The Sitka School District is committed to selecting instructional materials which will aid student development in three basic areas: (a) critical thinking; (b) objective evaluation; (c) aesthetic appreciation.

Instructional materials shall:

1. represent a diversity of views and expression in order to promote critical thinking and objective evaluation of the content.

2. accurately reflect contributions and achievements of women and men, as well as individuals and groups of various racial, social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

3. represent the highest quality appropriate to the level of students while considering curriculum objectives and availability of materials.

4. Provide a variety of titles at various
5. provide educational resources that allow students to evaluate, synthesize, and use information effectively.

6. provide access to educational resources for students with handicaps and other special educational needs.

7. be considered by the impact of each work as a whole—not in part. Few works are perfect; works containing a single flaw, flawed passage, or a number of flawed passages are not necessarily works of poor quality.

3. Selection Procedures:

The Board endorses, and directs, an educational selection process that promotes the district's mission and goals and that protects the constitutional rights of all students and staff.

Educational suitability is the major criterion for the selection of resources Professional staff use the following criteria.

Resources shall:

1. be consistent with the educational goals of the district and the objectives of individual schools and specific courses.

2. meet the interests, abilities, learning styles, and information needs of the users.

3. represent the diversity of religious, ethnic, political and cultural values held in a pluralistic society.

4. illustrate the contributions made by various groups to our national heritage and the world.

5. illustrate historical and contemporary forces in society.

6. provide various points of view, including those considered by some to be controversial.

7. represent the highest quality available in organization and presentation of information. They should have a superior print or no-print format.

8. Outline of the process used in the selection of resources and procedures for selection included one or more of the following: consulting reputable selection sources, curriculum guides, preview, or professional judgment.
Professionals shall:

1. evaluate existing resources.

2. assess curriculum needs.

3. consider networking arrangements.

4. consult reputable, professionally prepared aids for selection.

5. preview or examine the actual item whenever possible.

6. judge each item as a whole.

7. select resources for their strengths.

8. consider standards of technical quality and physical condition appropriate to the format and intended use.

9. consider scope, arrangement and organization, special features, and overall value to the collection.

Administrators, teachers, students, and other school district personnel and community persons may make recommendations for purchase, but final decisions will be made by professionals to whom the responsibility has been delegated.

Gift resources may be accepted with the understanding that they must meet criteria set for selection.

Selection is an ongoing process which includes the removal of resources which are no longer appropriate and replacement of resources which are lost or damaged.

4. Procedure for Handling Reconsideration of Educational Materials

A) Objections may be raised to instructional materials used in the system’s educational program despite the fact that the individuals selecting such material were duly qualified to make the selection, followed proper procedure and observed the criteria for selecting such material.

No duly selected materials whose appropriateness is challenged shall be removed from the school except upon the recommendation of a review committee (as provided below) with the concurrence of the superintendent or, upon formal action of the School Board when a recommendation of a review committee is appealed to it.
POLICY OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE SELECTION (continued) AR 6163.1(d)

The Board respects the rights of parents to restrict their children’s access to education resources that they may find offensive or inappropriate. The School District will make every attempt to consider parents’ concerns relating to resources available within the district; however, it is not practical for district staff to enforce every parental directive to each student within the district.

**B) Procedures to be observed:***

1. All complaints shall be reported to the staff member involved, whether received by telephone, letter, or in personal conversation.

2. Staff member involved shall contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and attempt to resolve it informally by explaining the philosophy and goals of the school district.

3. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the complainant shall be supplied with a packet of materials consisting of the materials selection policy statement and the procedure of handling objections. This packet will also include a standard printed form which shall be completed and returned before consideration will be given to the complaint.

4. If the formal request for reconsideration has not be received by the building principal within two weeks, it shall be considered closed.

5. Upon receipt of a completed objection form, the principal in the building involved will contact the Committee for the Re-evaluation of Educational Resources to consider the complaint. This committee shall consist of seven members which will include (1) an academic principal, (2) a parent at large, (3) a community member at large, (4) a librarian, (5) a teacher, (6) a PAC parent and (7) the high school Student Body President. Except for number seven, these members will be appointed for three (3) year staggered terms. This committee will undertake re-evaluation of the material(s) in question, in consideration of relevant Board policies and the principles of academic freedom that govern the acquisition and placement of educational resources within the district.

6. The committee shall meet to discuss the material, following the guidelines set forth in Instruction to Evaluation Committee and shall prepare a report on the material containing their recommendations on disposition of the matter.

7. The principal shall notify complainant of the decision and send a formal report and recommendation to the superintendent. In answering the complainant, the principal shall explain the materials selection system, give the guidelines used for selection, and cite the authorities used in reaching decisions. If the committee decides to keep the work that caused the complaint, the complainant shall be given an explanation. If the complaint is valid, the principal will acknowledge it and make recommended changes.
8. If the complainant is still not satisfied, an appeal may be made to the superintendent who, in turn, must render a final decision on the matter, subject only to appeal to the Board of Education. The board may seek assistance from outside organizations such as the American Library Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, etc., in making its determination.

SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT
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