

**I. Policy Statement**

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility for the selection and acquisition of instructional materials in accordance with current state law and policies. The Board further recognizes that the instructional materials selected will provide content that aligns with local, state, and national standards.

**II. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the evaluation, selection, and review of instructional materials for use in Howard County Public Schools.

**III. Definitions**

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Book – A written work that has been published in a variety of formats, such as print, digital, and audio recordings.
- B. Curricular Area Selection Committees – Committees of supervisors, teachers, parents, other community members and administrators that annually reviews instructional materials and proposes additions to and deletions from the approved curricular instructional materials list.
- C. Curricular Area Selection Criteria – Content specific guidelines and standards that are followed when selecting and purchasing instructional materials.
- D. Digital Tool – Any website, application (app), or software that requires an account.
- E. HCPSS Standard Selection Criteria – Systemwide guidelines and standards followed by all curricular areas when selecting and purchasing instructional materials.
- F. Instructional Materials – Resources used in educational lessons, which include active learning, digital tools, and reference materials for parents and students.
- G. Instructional Materials Criteria/Review Committee (CRC) – A countywide committee of teachers, parents, community members, students, subject area coordinators, and instructional facilitators who re-evaluate approved texts, review materials for which

requests for reevaluation have been received, and review curricular area selection criteria.

- H. Media Purchasing Sources – Published review resources chosen by the media selection committee used in the selection of books and audiovisual materials.
- I. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
  - 1. Biological Parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 2. Adoptive Parent – A parent who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  - 4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  - 5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article §7-101(c) (Informal Kinship Care).
  - 6. Foster Parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- J. Software – Any application or script that can be executed on a computer system, server, or other electronic device.
- K. Supervisor – A coordinator, instructional facilitator, director or other person assigned responsibility for the text or media selection process of a particular office or area.
- L. Supplemental Instructional Materials – Teacher-selected resources, other than approved course specific resources, used to support or reinforce instruction.

#### **IV. Standards**

- A. All instructional materials, including supplemental, that are selected to be used with students will be approved using HCPSS established procedures and selection criteria.
- B. The HCPSS will maintain systemwide selection criteria and specific curricular area selection criteria that aligns with national, state standards and law.

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- C. The HCPSS Standard Selection Criteria will be used in selecting all instructional and supplemental materials.
1. The HCPSS Standard Selection Criteria will be:
    - a. Aligned to the HCPSS curriculum.
    - b. Designated age/grade appropriate for the students for which the materials will be used.
    - c. Representative and respectful of the pluralistic nature and diversity of the global society.
    - d. Of high quality content and format.
    - e. A representation of contrasting points of view or multiple interpretations of content where appropriate for the approved curriculum.
    - f. Free of questions or activities that invade personal or family privacy by requiring students to reveal private, personal or family information such as parental or personal relationships, political beliefs, and religious and moral attitudes.
    - g. Compliant with HCPSS hardware, software, learning management system, and network standards to ensure optimum performance of electronic, digital, and web based instructional materials.
    - h. Compliant with federal, state, and local laws regarding data privacy, copyright and accessibility for all students.
  2. The following are the HCPSS Standard Selection Criteria that are to be used in selecting audio and/or video criteria:
    - a. Audio and video materials including streaming, should be used to enhance instruction according to approved curriculum. Schools must be judicious in acquiring and using audio and videos, making certain that they are not substituting their use for more worthwhile experiences or using an entire video when several selected excerpts would serve the instructional purpose more effectively. Rarely should teachers show full-length feature videos during class time.
    - b. Videos rated R, NC-17, or non-rated feature videos produced after 1990, may not be shown to classes in HCPSS; furthermore, PG-13 videos may not be shown in middle or elementary schools. PG rated videos may not be shown to students in Grades PreK-3. Annual notification of these restrictions should be made to parents and site-based staff.

- c. Teachers may show brief, appropriate excerpts from audio and visual excluded by this policy to address an important instructional purpose. The teacher is responsible to ensure that the excerpts conform to this policy and subject area selection criteria.
  - d. Prior to use with students, all audio and video material will be previewed and evaluated by those teachers who will use it. If the material meets curricular objectives and is age and developmentally appropriate, it may be used.
- D. The CRC will be maintained in order to review the curricular area selection criteria and oversee reevaluation requests.
- E. Each curricular area will have a curricular area selection committee that:
  - 1. Uses the HCPSS standard selection criteria to determine additional specific curricular area selection criteria, and;
  - 2. Evaluates and recommends instructional materials.

## **V. Responsibilities**

- A. The Superintendent/Designee will oversee the selection of instructional materials that align with the vision and goals of the HCPSS.
- B. The Superintendent/Designee will annually provide any recommended revisions of the HCPSS standard selection criteria, curricular instructional materials, and media purchasing source list to the Board for approval.
- C. The Superintendent/Designee will annually notify the public of this policy and of upcoming committee appointments via school system communication.
- D. Curricular area supervisors will establish selection committees and ensure that recommended instructional materials, including supplemental materials, are evaluated and approved through the established process.
- E. Curricular area supervisors will communicate the curricular area selection criteria with all staff.
- F. Principals will ensure that all instructional materials, including supplemental materials, used in their schools, are consistent with the HCPSS selection criteria.
- G. Teachers will ensure that all instructional materials, including supplemental materials, used in their classrooms, are consistent with the HCPSS selection criteria.
- H. Staff members using instructional materials will ensure that all approved procedures and selection criteria have been observed.

**VI. Delegation of Authority**

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for the implementation of this policy.

**VII. References**

- A. Legal
  - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq
  - Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794 (d))
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §4-205 (Powers and Duties of the County Superintendent)
  - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-106 (Textbooks, Materials of Instruction, and Supplies)
  - COMAR 13A.04.05, Education That is Multicultural
  - COMAR 13A.05.02, Administration of Services to Students with Disabilities
  
- B. Other Board Policies
  - Policy 4010 Donations
  - Policy 8000 Curriculum
  - Policy 8050 Teaching of Controversial Issues
  - Policy 8060 Resource Speakers
  - Policy 8080 Responsible Use of Technology and Social Media
  - Policy 10000 Parent, Family and Community Involvement
  
- C. Relevant Data Sources
  
- D. Other
  - Citizens Review of Instructional Materials form
  - Request for Reevaluation of Instructional Materials in Use form

**VIII. History**

ADOPTED: December 3, 1975

REVIEWED: July 1, 2012

MODIFIED:

REVISED: October 26, 1989  
December 12, 1996  
April 6, 2006  
January 11, 2018

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2018

**SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL**  
**MATERIALS**

Effective: July 1, 2018

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**I. Definition**

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definition applies:

Course-Specific Instructional Materials – Collection of primary resources for a specific course.

**II. General Procedures**

A. The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) procedures for the selection of instructional material will be used with the exception of the procedures established for:

1. The program of Family Life and Human Development; and
2. Any other material governed by COMAR.

B. The participation of parents, teachers, students, and other interested community members is a significant element in the total selection process. Participation should be representative of the population of Howard County as a whole.

C. Only materials that are chosen using approved procedures and curricular area selection criteria may be used with students.

**III. Committee Procedures**

The Curriculum Area Selection Committees develop selection criteria for curricular areas. The Instructional Materials Criteria/Review Committee (CRC) re-evaluates approved texts, reviews materials for which requests for reevaluation have been received, and reviews curricular area selection criteria. Both committees will reflect the diversity of the greater HCPSS' community. Membership of the committees will consist of students, teachers, parents or other interested Howard County community members, and appropriate supervisors who represent a variety of views, including cultural, ethnic, and religious.

A. Curriculum Area Selection Committees

1. Each curricular area will create and maintain curriculum office selection criteria.

2. Each curricular area will manage the review and selection process of all instructional materials, including digital tools.
  3. Each curricular area will use the curriculum area selection criteria to curate and review course-specific instructional materials.
  4. Each supervisor will convene a Curricular Area Selection Committee.
    - a. The Curricular Area Selection Committee will evaluate and recommend materials according to the curricular area and HCPSS selection criteria.
    - b. The committee membership will include representatives from the following groups:
      - i. Curricular staff;
      - ii. Teachers;
      - iii. School-based administrators;
      - iv. Parents;
      - v. Students; and
      - vi. Community members.
  5. Materials for media centers may be purchased from the list of approved media purchasing sources maintained by the Media Services Office.
  6. Materials for media centers not reviewed in approved media purchasing sources may be purchased upon favorable evaluation using the “Selection Criteria for Media Center Materials” form. A separate form is required for each item purchased. Such materials will be in agreement with established policies and selection criteria.
- B. Instructional Materials Criteria/Review Committee (CRC)
1. Members of the CRC will be appointed annually for a two-year period with one-half of the committee to be replaced or reappointed each year. The CRC will:
    - a. Meet annually.
    - b. Review the curricular area selection criteria.
    - c. Review materials for which requests for reevaluation have been received.
  2. Community members will be selected for the committee according to the following procedures:
    - a. The chairperson will annually notify the general public of upcoming appointments to the committee, functions of the committee, and of the availability of application forms.

- b. The chairperson will oversee the selection of applicants to fill vacancies.
  - c. All committee members will be informed of the selection results.
  - d. All committee members will be given a roster of the CRC.
  - e. Additional teachers, community members, and appropriate subject area supervisors may participate in deliberations or complete assigned tasks, but will not have a vote in those proceedings.
3. The committee members may represent more than one role. The committee membership will include:
    - a. Chairperson – HCPSS staff member selected by the Superintendent/Designee.
    - b. Students – Students who will be named to serve on the committee.
    - c. Teachers/Media Specialists – Teachers representing elementary, middle, and high schools from various disciplines, including School Library Media.
    - d. Curriculum Supervisors – The chairperson will assign the appropriate subject area supervisor to the committee based upon the material to be reevaluated.
    - e. Community Members – Community members comprised of:
      - i. A majority of the community members having children enrolled in HCPSS.
      - ii. The remaining community members being residents of HCPSS.
  4. At meetings where recommendations are made, a quorum must be present and at least three of the representative groups must be in attendance. A majority vote of those present will constitute the recommendation of the committee.
  5. The chairperson of the committee will submit reevaluations made by the committee to the Superintendent/Designee and inform the initiator(s) of the request for review of the decision.

#### **IV. Teacher-Selected Instructional Materials**

- A. All instructional materials to be used with students will be consistent with approved policies and the established HCPSS Systemwide Criteria and the curricular area selection criteria.



- B. Digital tools will be on the HCPSS approved list of Supplemental Digital Tools before being used with students.

**V. Public Review of Proposed Materials**

- A. Prior to consideration by the Board, all instructional materials intended for systemwide student use will be publically available for 14 calendar days for parents and community members to review and comment.
- B. HCPSS Curricular Programs will notify the public regarding the opportunity to review of the recommended instructional materials.
- C. Any HCPSS staff member, community member, HCPSS student, or his/her parent may provide feedback concerning the proposed instructional materials by completing the Citizen’s Review of Instructional Materials form included in the public notice.
- D. Curricular Area Selection Committee will review and respond to all concerns addressed by the CRC.

**VI. Review and Reevaluation of Materials In Use**

- A. The principal will make available specific material for review upon community member request and make every effort to resolve the concern at the school level.
- B. Following review of the material and a conference with the principal, the community member may file a “Request for Reevaluation of Instructional Materials In Use” form with the principal of the school. A copy of the completed form will be forwarded by the principal to the Superintendent/Designee.
- C. The Superintendent/Designee, upon notification that a satisfactory solution was not reached at the local school level, will refer the matter to the CRC.
- D. The CRC will reevaluate the work in consideration of the request and the appropriate selection criteria and make a recommendation to the Superintendent/Designee.
  - 1. The chair of the CRC will schedule a meeting of the CRC to reevaluate the material in a timely manner. Prior to that meeting:
    - a. The CRC chair will notify the appropriate supervisor, CRC members, and other relevant personnel of the request and the reevaluation date.
    - b. The appropriate supervisor will obtain sample copies of the material and forward these to the CRC chair.

- c. The CRC chair will distribute the sample materials to the CRC members at least two weeks before the scheduled reevaluation.
  2. The CRC chair will facilitate the reevaluation meeting but not vote. The appropriate supervisor will participate as a voting member; any non-committee participants may not vote.
  3. After the meeting, the CRC chair will notify the Superintendent/Designee in writing of the committee's recommendation.
  4. The Superintendent/Designee will decide whether to remove or retain the material and notify the initiator of the reevaluation in writing.
- E. Further appeals are directed to the Superintendent of Schools.
- F. The Board will serve as the final level of appeal within the HCPSS.
- G. Once Board approval has been given for reevaluated materials, no further reevaluation will be made for at least two years.

## **VII. History**

ADOPTED: October 26, 1989  
REVIEWED: July 1, 2012  
MODIFIED:  
REVISED: June 13, 1991  
December 12, 1996  
July 28, 2003  
April 6, 2006  
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