



INSTRUCTION: Instruction

Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials

I. Purpose

To establish guidelines for the evaluation and selection of instructional materials in Baltimore County Public Schools.

II. Definition

Instructional Materials – Instructional content approved for systemwide use and provided to the student regardless of format, including printed or digital materials.

III. Responsibilities

A. Under the direction of the superintendent, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) is responsible for the evaluation and selection of instructional materials for approval in order to secure and make available for students and instructional staff instructional materials that support the curriculum and goals of the Board of Education of Baltimore County.

B. C&I will coordinate with the Division of Business Services and stakeholders to evaluate, select, and procure instructional materials.

IV. Guidelines

A. Instructional materials will be evaluated and selected so that the materials used for teaching and learning support the curriculum and meet the diverse needs of students.

B. Selection of appropriate instructional materials shall adhere to applicable federal and state laws.

C. The instructional materials that have been recommended for selection by C&I will be forwarded to the Board for adoption.

D. Gifts and donations of instructional materials are not exempt from, and must comply with, the essential evaluation criteria, as outlined in paragraph V below.

V. Evaluation

- A. The following criteria will be considered when evaluating and selecting textbooks and other instructional materials. The instructional material should be:
 - 1. Aligned to the BCPS curriculum and support student achievement;
 - 2. Accurate and current in terms of content;
 - 3. Representative of the pluralistic nature and diversity of a global society;
 - 4. Free of bias, stereotype, discrimination, and prejudice;
 - 5. Age/grade appropriate for the students for which the materials will be used;
 - 6. Representative of different viewpoints and perspectives on controversial subjects;
 - 7. Free of questions or activities that invade personal or family privacy by requiring students to reveal private, personal, or family information;
 - 8. Considered for value in terms of purchase price;
 - 9. Compliant with BCPS hardware, software, learning management system, and network standards to ensure optimum performance of electronic, digital, and web based instructional materials; and
 - 10. Compliant with federal and state laws regarding accessibility for all students.

VI. Selection

- A. Each office within C&I is responsible for the evaluation and selection process of materials specific to its area of instruction.
- B. Each office head shall convene a subject-area Selection Committee to evaluate and recommend materials.
 - 1. Each selection committee shall represent the diversity of the greater Baltimore County Public Schools' community through the inclusion of one or more representatives from the following groups:
 - a. C&I staff;
 - b. teachers;
 - c. department chairs;
 - d. school-based administrators; and
 - e. community stakeholder group.

RULE 6002

- C. Each office head shall ensure that the Selection Committee meets and makes recommendations in accordance with the timeframe necessary to ensure that the selection of instructional materials aligns with the development of new curriculum and/or the need to update existing instructional materials.
- D. Each office head will maintain documentation of the Selection Committee's recommendations. The documentation shall include:
 - 1. A summary of the materials reviewed;
 - 2. Each committee member's evaluation form; and
 - 3. The committee's reasons for selection or rejection of the instructional materials.
- E. The office head will forward the Selection Committee's recommendation to the appropriate executive director for consideration and or submission to the Chief Academic Officer.

VII. Public Review of Proposed Materials

- A. Prior to consideration by the Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board), all instructional materials intended for systemwide student use will be placed on public display in order to provide parents and community members an opportunity for review and comment.
- B. The office head will arrange for the public display, or where appropriate inspection via computer for electronic format, and provide notification to the public of instructional materials proposed for student use. Each office head will prepare and advertise on the school system's Web page that the materials recommended for selection are available for public review and will be open for review for fourteen (14) calendar days.
- C. The public display of proposed instructional materials will be conducted for 14 calendar days on the school system's Web page.
 - 1. The public notice will include the location where the materials may be accessed and reviewed.
 - 2. Printed materials will be made available, upon request, for review during regular business hours.
- D. Any BCPS staff member, BCPS student, or his/her parent/guardian may provide feedback concerning the proposed instructional materials by completing the *Citizen's Review of Instructional Materials* (See, Rule 6002,

Form A). Instructions for submitting *Citizen's Review of Instructional Materials* will be included in the public notice.

- E. If all responses are positive, the executive director will notify the Chief Academic Officer who will make a recommendation for approval to the Board.
- F. If negative responses are received, the office head will contact the individual to discuss the concerns and respond to specific questions.

VIII. Approval

- A. All instructional materials intended for systemwide use with students must be approved by the Board prior to purchase.

IX. Citizen Comment on Approved Instructional Materials

- A. Any BCPS staff member, BCPS student, or his/her parent/guardian, or other Baltimore County stakeholder may provide feedback concerning the instructional materials already in use by completing the *Citizen's Review of Instructional Materials* form (See, Rule 6002, Form A).
 - 1. If the instructional materials in question are currently being used in instructional programs, the materials will not be withdrawn from use during the reconsideration process.
- B. Upon receipt of the citizen's review form, the appropriate executive director will confer with staff and determine whether the issues were covered in principle by previous decisions.
- C. If it is determined that the matter has not been covered in principle, the executive director may request that the office head reconvene its Selection Committee for the purpose of reviewing citizen feedback and recommend a response to the questions/concerns submitted on Form A.
- D. Within 30 calendar days of reconvening the Selection Committee, the Selection Committee will forward its responses to the questions/concerns to the executive director.
- E. The executive director will:
 - a. Review the recommended response from the Selection Committee and forward to the Chief Academic Officer for review and action.

- b. A written response shall be forwarded from the Chief Academic Officer to the originator of Form A, question/concern. In most cases, the originator of a Form A, question/concern can expect a written response within 30 calendar days.
- c. Failure to receive a written response within 30 business days does not mean that any party has become the prevailing party.

X. Appeals

A. Appeal to the Superintendent

- 1. If a person is dissatisfied with the decision of the Chief Academic Officer, he/she may appeal the decision, in writing, to the Superintendent.
 - a. All appeals must be in writing and will be deemed timely if postmarked within **15** calendar days of the date of the Chief Academic Officer's decision.
- 2. The superintendent will establish a Review Board which will be responsible for evaluating the complaint and issuing a final decision on behalf of the superintendent.
 - a. The Review Board will be composed of at least four members to include:
 - (1) the appropriate office head;
 - (2) the Chief Academic Officer;
 - (3) no fewer than two assistant superintendents;
 - (4) teachers and other staff members or participants at the discretion of the Superintendent.
- 3. The Review Board will, upon review of the documentation and in consultation with appropriate staff, makes a recommendation to the Superintendent who will issue the decision.

B. Appeal to the Board of Education.

The appellant may appeal the Superintendent's decision as outlined in Board Policy 8340, *Appeal Before the Board of Education*.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article §4-205, *Powers and duties of the county superintendent*.
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-106, *Textbooks, Materials of Instruction, and Supplies*

RULE 6002

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 3209, *Purchasing Principles*
Board of Education Policy 3210, *Purchasing Guides*
Board of Education Policy 6000, *Curriculum and Instruction*
Board of Education Policy 6102, *Teaching Controversial Issues*

Rule

Superintendent of Schools

Approved: 11/11/76

Revised: 04/09/87

Revised: 09/07/10

Revised: 09/09/14