

CHAPTER 4.00 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS EVALUATION, SELECTION, AND OBJECTION TO USE

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All classroom instructional materials used for the first time in Sarasota County Schools, including state-adopted single source textbooks, instructional aids, and other supplementary materials, shall undergo an evaluation. This evaluation shall determine the suitability of the materials for information being taught in the classroom in relationship to State standards, curriculum frameworks, and district programs, as well as with state and district performance standards.

- I. Evaluation of Core Adopted Instructional Materials. The Superintendent shall establish a District Review Committee and develop procedures for the review and evaluation of instructional materials. The District Review Committee will include content area teachers, one or more parents of children at content grade level and district personnel. Meetings of the District review committee convened for the purpose of ranking, eliminating, or selecting instructional materials for recommendation to the School Board must be noticed and open to the public in accordance with s. 286.011 F.S. The staff involved in this process shall recommend to the Superintendent the instructional materials that address the goals and objectives for adopted courses of study and the course descriptions established by State Board Rule as well as the state and district performance standards for submission to the Board for adoption. The instructional materials shall be from the State-adopted instructional materials list if there has been a State adoption or from publishers and other resources if there has not been a State adoption.
- II. Adoption of Instructional Materials. The following procedures for the adoption of instructional materials apply only to those instructional materials that serve as the major content tool and basis for instruction for each student in the core subject areas of Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science, as well as Career and Technical Education, World Languages, Art, Music, Health, PE, and Computer Science.
 - A. Prior to final adoption, student editions of the recommended instructional materials will be made accessible for review online for at least twenty (20) calendar days before consideration by the School Board.
 - B. Public notice of the materials being considered for adoption shall specifically list the materials and how they can be accessed.
 - C. The School Board shall conduct an open noticed public hearing to receive comment on recommended materials prior to adoption.

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- D. The School Board shall conduct an open, noticed public meeting to approve an annual instructional materials plan to identify core adopted instructional materials that will be purchased. The public meeting will take place on a different date after the public hearing.
- E. The School Board must select, approve, adopt, or purchase all materials as a separate line item on the action agenda.
- F. The following procedures shall apply to all objections to instructional materials adopted by the School Board.
 - 1. The parent or a resident of the County, as defined by Florida Statutes, may contest the district school board's adoption of a specific instructional material by filing a written objection using the form that is available on the District website.
 - 2. The form must be signed by the parent or resident of the county, include the required contact information, and state the objection to the instructional material based on the criteria stated in Florida Statutes s. 1006.31(2) or 1006.40(3)(d).
 - 3. The written objection must be filed within thirty (30) calendar days of the adoption of the material. A complainant who does not complete and return the form within the required time shall receive no consideration. The statement shall include the following information:
 - a. Author, compiler, or editor.
 - b. Publisher.
 - c. Title.
 - d. Reason for objection.
 - e. Page number of each item challenged; and
 - f. Signature, address, and telephone number of person making the complaint.
 - 4. Within thirty (30) days after the initial thirty-day period has expired, the School Board shall conduct at least one public hearing before an unbiased and qualified hearing officer on all petitions timely received during the thirty-day time period. The petitioner(s) shall be notified in writing of the date and time of the hearing at least seven (7) days prior to the hearing. The hearing must provide sufficient procedural protections to allow each petitioner an

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adequate and fair opportunity to be heard and present evidence to the hearing officer.

5. The contested material shall be made available to the public online at least seven (7) days before the hearing.
 6. The decision of the School Board, after convening a hearing, shall be final and not subject to further review or petition.
- G. The Superintendent shall annually submit to the Commissioner of Education a report identifying each material the District received an objection to pursuant to s. 1006.40(3)(d) and the specific objections raised; the material that was removed or discontinued as a result of an objection; and the grade level and course for which the removed or discontinued material was used.
- III. Objection to other Classroom Instructional Aids and Materials. The following policies apply to additional instructional aids for classroom use that have not been adopted by the State Board of Education, and approved for use:
- A. A parent, as defined by Florida Statutes, may object to his/her child's use of a specific instructional material or an adult student may object to the use of a specific material in his/her instructional program. The parent or adult student may request a conference with the principal or principal's designee to discuss the use of the material.
 - B. The complainant will be provided with the District's policies and procedures for the selection of instructional materials. The principal or designee will explain the use of the material in the instructional program and answer questions from the individual.
 - C. If the issue is not resolved at the conference, the complainant will be provided with the form to file a written objection and an explanation of the process that will be followed.
 - D. Within ten (10) working days of such filing, parents of other students in the class(es) involved or potentially affected in that school shall be notified in writing by the principal that a challenge has been initiated.
 - E. School-level Instructional Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee shall consist of four (4) teachers selected by the principal from that particular school and three (3) parents who reside in the particular school zone to evaluate the challenged materials and to make

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recommendations of any changes. The principal shall notify the Instructional Materials Supervisor, the appropriate Curriculum Director, and the appropriate Executive Director, when a committee is convened. The appropriate Executive Director will also notify the school board.

- F. Challenged materials shall be reviewed by the committee, considering the specific objections raised. The committee shall report its decision within fifteen (15) working days. The committee recommendations shall address whether the challenged material is consistent with the selection criteria outlined in SB 4.21. The Committee shall have no authority to determine curriculum. Within ten (10) working days of the Committee's decision, the complainant shall be informed by the principal or designee, in writing, concerning the committee's decision.
 - 1. The Complainant shall be given a copy of the Committee's decision and a copy of the procedures for filing an appeal.
- G. District-Level Appeals. An appeal of a school committee's determination to retain challenged materials must be filed with the principal within five (5) working days of notification of that determination and shall include a specific statement of the complainant's grounds for disagreement with the committee's determination. The appeal should then be sent to the Chief Academic Officer.
- H. The Chief Academic Officer shall designate the Curriculum Director for the appropriate level as being responsible for the organization of this appeal review committee according to School Board policies. The committee's recommendations shall be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer within fifteen (15) working days. A committee member shall not be selected from the school where the challenged materials originated. The district level committee will include:
 - 1. District Level Staff Members. Two staff members from the level or special area where the material has been challenged.
 - 2. School Based Administrator. One School Based Administrator shall be selected by the appropriate Curriculum Director from the same level as the school at which the challenge originates and shall serve on the review panel for the particular material.
 - 3. Teachers. Three teachers from the same level at which the challenge originates shall be selected by the appropriate Curriculum Director.

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4. Parents. Four parents will be selected. Two shall be parents from the level where the challenge originated, and one shall be from each remaining level.
 5. The committee's review shall be treated objectively, unemotionally, and in a businesslike manner and shall be conducted in the best interest of the students, the school, and the community.
- I. The complainant shall be informed, in writing, within fifteen (15) working days after the committee's recommendation is received by the Chief Academic Officer.
 - J. A School Board appeal may be requested by the complainant when the school and district-level appeals do not satisfactorily resolve the concerns. The School Board shall review recommendations from the school and district-level committees and shall render the final decision on the complainant's concern.
 - K. The decision to remove challenged material from use shall, unless otherwise determined by the School Board, be effective at the grade level at which the material is in use and all lower grades.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

1001.41, 1001.42, F.S.

LAW(S) IMPLEMENTED:

1001.43, 1006.28, 1006.29(5),
1006.31, 1006.32, 1006.40 F.S.

HISTORY:

ADOPTED: 10/18/22
REVISION DATE(S): _____
FORMERLY: NEW