

# REGULATION

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Related Entries:** BLB, EGB-RA, IGP-RA, IGT-RA, IIB

**Responsible Office:** Deputy Superintendent of Schools

### Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials and Library Books

#### I. PURPOSE

To set forth the procedures for the evaluation and selection of instructional materials and library books in order to locate and make available for students and professional staff members instructional materials that support the curriculum and goals of education on a countywide basis

To establish a procedure for parents, students, and staff to request a reconsideration of previously approved instructional materials being used in MCPS

#### II. BACKGROUND

Instructional materials are evaluated and selected according to specified procedures by professional staff to assure that the materials in teaching/learning situations support the curriculum and meet the diverse needs of students in accordance with state laws.

#### III. DEFINITIONS

A. *Instructional materials* are print and non-print items that are designed to impart information to the learner in the teaching/learning process. Instructional materials may be consumable and expendable and include such items as charts, kits, textbooks, magazines, newspapers, pictures, recordings, slides, transparencies, videos, video discs, workbooks, and electronic resources such as software, CD-ROMs, and online services.

B. *Library books* are literary works, narratives, and other texts that are selected for research or free choice reading but not used for directed instruction.

- C. *Subject-Area Evaluation and Selection Committees* consist of teachers, media specialists, other relevant staff, and the coordinator/supervisor of each subject area who evaluate textbooks, videos, electronic resources, and other instructional materials for county-wide use.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

##### A. General

1. The Evaluation and Selection Unit coordinates the processes of the evaluation of instructional materials and library books in accordance with this regulation.
2. Instructional materials and all library books are to be reviewed and evaluated prior to purchase.
3. All instructional materials and library books received as gifts and intended for use with or by MCPS students must be evaluated.
4. Instructional materials duplicated or copied in compliance with Regulation EGB-RA: *Using Copyrighted Materials* for use with or by MCPS students must be evaluated.
5. All instructional materials and library books must be selected from those approved through the evaluation process.
6. Guidelines to implement specific evaluation and selection procedures are provided by the Evaluation and Selection Unit.

##### B. Identification of Materials

1. Professional staff members and Subject-Area Evaluation and Selection Committees may request and evaluate materials by using:
  - a) MCPS Form 365-25: *Record of Evaluation for Instructional Materials* for print and non-print materials
  - b) MCPS Form 365-29: *EPIC-CDROM/Computer Software Record of Evaluation* for electronic materials

2. Newly approved textbooks will remain in the Evaluation and Selection Unit for 30 calendar days to permit examination by professional staff and parents before school orders will be honored.
3. The Evaluation and Selection Unit will coordinate all requests from vendors and representatives who want to meet with Subject-Area Evaluation and Selection Committees and workshops held by subject-area coordinators.
4. Professional staff members are encouraged to seek newly published educational materials through professional activities such as conferences and training sessions. Requests for preview and evaluation copies of materials are made through the Evaluation and Selection Unit. Vendors who contact staff should be directed to the Evaluation and Selection Unit.
5. Vendors and publishers' representatives are prohibited from soliciting the sale of instructional materials on school premises. (See Regulation COD-RA: *Prohibition of Vendors on or Near School Premises*, and Exhibit COD-EA: *Vendors on School Grounds, Montgomery County Code*.)

C. Evaluation of Instructional Materials

1. General
  - a) All textbooks must be evaluated by Subject-Area Evaluation and Selection Committees using MCPS Form 365-25: *Record of Evaluation for Instructional Materials*.
  - b) Instructional materials for county-wide use must be evaluated by Subject-Area Evaluation and Selection Committees using MCPS Form 365-25: *Record of Evaluation for Instructional Materials*.
  - c) Instructional materials, other than textbooks and Family Life and Human Sexuality materials, for single-school use must be evaluated by more than one professional staff member (the school media specialist, a teacher in the content area, or an administrator) using MCPS Form 365-25: *Record of Evaluation for Instructional Materials*.
  - d) Instructional materials should, in their overall effect, make a positive contribution to the MCPS program and directly align to MCPS curriculum. Titles that are part of a series and kits or sets must be evaluated individually on their own merit.

- e) Criteria that should be applied to the evaluation of all instructional materials are:
- (1) Materials shall be directly aligned to the MCPS curriculum and relevant to and reflective of the multicultural society and global community.
  - (2) As appropriate, the materials shall offer opportunities to better understand and appreciate the issues, aspirations, and achievements of women and persons from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, avoiding those which contain negative attitudes, stereotypes, caricatures, epithets, and dialect (except in historical or literary contexts).
  - (3) As appropriate, the materials shall provide students with the opportunity to investigate, analyze, and evaluate social issues.
  - (4) Materials shall take the following into account:
    - (a) Direct support of student achievement toward MCPS curriculum standards
    - (b) Authenticity
    - (c) Impact on instructional time
    - (d) Age/grade appropriateness (in the case of motion media, Motion Picture Movie Association age ratings must be applied when applicable)
    - (e) Recency – Copyright date
    - (f) Clarity, conciseness, and understandability
    - (g) Value in terms of purchase price
    - (h) Compliance of electronic materials and resources with MCPS hardware and network standards

## 2. Family Life and Human Sexuality

- a) Consistent with MCPS Regulation IGP-RA, *Comprehensive Health Education Instructional Program*, instructional materials that are to be used in direct classroom instruction in the family life and human sexuality education program (~~Focus Areas II and III~~) are to be evaluated within the health education curriculum advisory committee in accordance with criteria established by MCPS and the Maryland State Department of Education.
- b) Annually, under direction of the principal, each school must organize a school-community advisory group representing a variety of viewpoints within the community.
  - (1) This committee will review the curriculum and instructional materials for the family life and human sexuality program and will assist the principal in planning information sessions for parents about the program.
  - (2) Parents/guardians will have an opportunity to review the state and county regulations and to examine the curriculum and the county-approved instructional materials to be used with students.
  - (3) The committee will advise the principal on implementation of the program and assist the principal in evaluating the program.
- c) Instructional materials in the family life and human sexuality curriculum that are approved only for direct supervised instruction are to be placed in a designated area of the school accessible to staff only.

### D. Evaluation of Library Books

1. Approval of library books requires review and signature of more than one professional staff member using MCPS Form 365-25: *Record of Evaluation for Instructional Materials*.
2. Professional staff members may use reviews from selected journals and MCPS bibliographies to evaluate library books.

### E. Review of Approved Instructional Materials and Library Books

1. School-based and central office staff will review on an on-going basis all instructional materials in schools based upon curriculum objectives and revisions, datedness of material, out-of-print items, challenge to authenticity, and comparative market prices.
2. The library media specialist, in conjunction with other local school professional staff, will review the media center collection on an ongoing basis.
3. MCPS professional staff may request, through the Evaluation and Selection Unit, newly published and updated instructional materials and library books from vendors and publishers by completing the bibliographic data on MCPS Form 365-25: *Record of Evaluation for Instructional Materials*.

F. Reconsideration of Instructional Materials and Library Books

When the appropriateness of instructional materials or library books is questioned by a parent, student, or staff member, resolution begins at the school level.

1. When resolution cannot be reached at the school level, a “*Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials and Library Books*” form, which can be obtained from the supervisor of Evaluation and Selection, must be completed and forwarded to the Evaluation and Selection Unit. The supervisor of evaluation and selection shall contact the principal or library media specialist for all pertinent data concerning the request.
2. Upon receipt of the “*Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials and Library Books*,” the Evaluation and Selection Unit will:
  - a) Appoint an ad hoc committee to reevaluate the material and establish a date for completion of its work. The committee will be composed of school library media specialist(s), teacher(s), principal(s), counselor(s), subject coordinator(s), and one librarian from the public sector other than MCPS, such as the public library system or higher education.
  - b) Notify in writing principals, library media specialists, and school staff giving pertinent information concerning the text and the reason for the request. Such materials will not be purchased during the reevaluation period. The instructional material or library books in

question will not be withdrawn from the collection during the time the committee is reevaluating the material.

- c) Any professional staff member may then write a memorandum to the supervisor of Evaluation and Selection outlining concerns relevant to the item in question. All correspondence becomes a part of the committee file.
- c) The instructional material or library book in question and the report of the ad hoc committee will be examined by the director of School Library Media Programs and the associate superintendent for Instruction and Program Development. Upon examination of the recommendations of the ad hoc committee and in consultation with other staff members at the discretion of the associate superintendent, the associate superintendent will decide the disposition of the item in question.
- e) The parent or staff member who filed the complaint will be sent a letter signed by the associate superintendent for Instruction and Program Development stating the decision.
- f) Any material that has been through the complete reevaluation process within the past three years will not be reconsidered. The earlier committee action will stand.
- g) Consideration of a title that has been removed through the reevaluation process must be initiated by professional staff using MCPS Form 365-25.
- h) Schools will be notified by written communication as to the status of the reevaluated material.

G. Appeals

1. Appeals to the Superintendent of Schools

- a) Requests to appeal the decision of the associate superintendent for instruction and program development must be made in writing to the superintendent.
- b) The superintendent or designee will, upon review of the documentation constituting the record and consultation with

appropriate administrative staff, respond in writing to the complainant.

2. Appeals to the Board of Education

- a) Requests to appeal the decision of the superintendent must be made in writing to the president of the Board of Education. The appeal must be related to the original particulars cited on the *Request for Consideration of Instructional Materials and Library Books* form.
- b) When a request for appeal is received, the superintendent will provide each Board member with a file on the item under appeal to include:
  - (1) A copy of the “*Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials and Library Books*” form submitted by the complainant
  - (2) Available published reviews of the item
  - (3) A copy of the evaluation form
  - (4) A statement from the principal of the school from which the complaint originated about how the item is used in the instructional program
  - (5) Any statements from other professional staff concerning the usefulness of the item
  - (6) The report of the reevaluation ad hoc committee
  - (7) A copy of the letter notifying the parent, student, or staff member who filed the complaint of the superintendent’s decision
  - (8) A copy of the publication in dispute
  - (9) Any additional relevant information
- c) Consideration of the appeal will be handled by the Board in accordance with Policy BLB: *Rules of Procedure in Appeals and Hearings*.

***Regulation History:*** Formerly Regulation No. 365-2, October 16, 1980; revised November 23, 1999; updated office titles June 1, 2000; revised September 20, 2005; technical update for compliance with COMAR, March 29, 2023.