

Selection of Learning Resources Procedure

RATIONALE:

It is the practice of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) to provide a wide range of learning resources at various levels of complexity, reflecting diversity of appeal, portraying gender and cultural inclusiveness, and representing multiple perspectives, to meet the needs of students, teachers and the community.

It is the responsibility of the professional staff of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, under the direction of the administrator and/or supervisory officer, to consider the criteria listed in “Criteria for Selection of Learning Resources” in selecting new learning resources which are of high quality, appropriate to the school community, and consistent with the standards and criteria established by the Ministry of Education and Training to enrich and support the curriculum.

Professional staff should consult with students, parents, school councils, professional agencies, and/or community representatives in the selection of learning resources when deemed appropriate by the school administrator or supervisory officer.

In the selection of learning resources, staff must adhere to copyright restrictions and appropriate licensing agreements.

Where possible, staff should endeavour to include Canadian learning resources representing the Canadian perspective and the creative talent of our nation when making selections.

Learning resources selected should represent a balance of sources of information, including traditional (e.g., print), and non-traditional (e.g., electronic books, software applications, makerspace learning materials).

TERMINOLOGY:

Learning resources: For the purposes of this policy procedure, the term “learning resources” refers to any person(s) or any material that is acquired for instruction and/or evaluation.

PROCEDURES:

1.0 Criteria for Selection of Learning Resources

- 1.1 Individuals involved in the selection of learning resources shall consider the following criteria understanding that not all of the following criteria may be met in each resource:

- 1.1.1 Relevance to the curriculum as outlined by the Ministry, the Board and the school.

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- 1.1.2 Develop literary and aesthetic appreciation, encourage the exploration of different points of view, and enable students to develop, with guidance, the best practices of inquiry based learning, character education, citizenship, communication, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity, and the ability to become informed decision-makers and problem-solvers.
- 1.1.3 Addressing specific interests, abilities, maturity levels and needs of students in terms of their emotional development, intellectual development, language development, physical development, social development, and learning styles.
- 1.1.4 Reflecting the contributions made by diverse groups to their community, to Canada as a multicultural nation, and to the world.
- 1.1.5 Alignment with HWDSB's Equity Policy - learning resources must promote fair treatment of individuals or groups regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, gender expression, gender identity, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other, similar factors.
- 1.1.6 Exclusion of all bias or stereotyping.
- 1.1.7 Current and accurate content.
- 1.1.8 Good writing and production values, good organization, and clear and logical presentation.
- 1.1.9 Appropriate visuals (pictures, charts, graphs, tables, maps, etc.).
- 1.1.10 High technical and aesthetic quality, good quality material designed for durability and visual attractiveness.
- 1.2 Professional staff should consult selection aids when considering new learning resources for purchase or when reviewing existing resources. Selection aids include:
 - 1.2.1 Ministry of Education Curriculum Documents
 - 1.2.2 Ministry of Education Publications
 - 1.2.3 HWDSB Strategic Directions

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- 1.2.4 Trillium Textbook List and the *Guidelines for the Approval of Textbooks, 2008 document* (www.trilliumlist.ca)
 - 1.2.5 Professionally written or prepared reviews
 - 1.2.6 Curriculum Services Canada site (www.curriculum.org)
 - 1.2.7 System Learning Commons Collection Development Guidelines
 - 1.2.8 Catalogues, resource guides, and the learning resource itself, when available
 - 1.2.9 HWDSB Software Adoption and Acquisition (Ad Hoc) Committee
- 1.3 Learning resources should be reviewed by professional staff on a regular basis to ensure that all resources meet current criteria, support changing curriculum needs and reflect the school community.

2.0 Sensitive Subject Matter

- 2.1 Any learning resource dealing with racial prejudice, human sexuality or other sensitive subject matters for use in the classroom must be reviewed and assessed for appropriateness by professional staff prior to use by students. Parents, school council representatives, professional agencies, and members of the community may also assist professional staff in this determination.
- 2.2 Any learning resource circulated centrally throughout the District School Board that is deemed sensitive is to be clearly marked with a warning label and should be carefully previewed by the classroom teacher prior to use with students.
- 2.3 If sensitive subject matter is to be used for instruction, a letter signed by the school administrator or designate describing the material and a form to obtain parent/guardian permission for the student to participate in the use of the learning material shall go home with the students. The school administrator shall arrange for any concerned parent/guardian and/or the School Council to preview the material prior to use in the classroom if deemed appropriate.
- 2.4 It is expected that the school administrator and teacher will recognize and plan for the possibility that some children may be placed in an awkward situation if subsequent classroom activities are directly related to the sensitive material. Teacher and/or school administrators must be prepared to provide alternatives in these situations.

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3.0 Procedure for Challenging Learning Resources

- 3.1 A challenge may be initiated by a group or an individual who feels a resource is objectionable or inappropriate for use with particular individuals or in the system as a whole.
- 3.2 Challenges are to be initiated at the school level where the resource is being used. The school level procedure is outlined below. Challenges not resolved at the school will follow the procedure as outlined in Challenging Learning Resources—System Level section. A challenged resource will remain in use until a decision is made.
- 3.3 Challenging Learning Resources – School Level:
 - 3.3.1 The challenge is directed to the school administrator of the school where the resource is being used. The school administrator provides a copy of the Selection of Learning Resources Procedure to the challenger as well as the Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources – School Level form (Appendix I), which must be completed by the challenger before the school conference. No consideration of the complaint will be granted until this form has been completed and returned to the school.
 - 3.3.2 The school administrator holds a school conference with all parties concerned following the format outlined in Appendix II. At this time, the challenger may outline the concerns that initiated the challenge.
 - 3.3.3 The school administrator decides:
 - To retain the resource in question for its present use, or
 - To substitute an alternate resource, (e.g., an item is removed as a required text, and retained as an elective resource) or
 - To retain the resource in question for restricted use (e.g., for a particular grade level), or
 - To deem the resource inappropriate and remove it from use in the school.
 - 3.3.4 The school administrator informs the community, as appropriate.
 - 3.3.5 The school administrator provides a copy of the summary of the meeting to the challenger (See Appendix III). A copy is kept on file in the school office and another copy is forwarded to the Director of Education as well as the Superintendent of Education responsible for the school in question, for appropriate action.
 - 3.3.6 If the challenge is resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, no further action is necessary. If the challenge is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, reconsideration of the resource may proceed at the system level.

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3.4 Challenging Learning Resources – System Level:

- 3.4.1 The Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources at the system level is initiated by the completion of The Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources -System Level form(Appendix IV), which is available from the school administrator. The Request for Reconsideration form is forwarded to the Director of Education.
- 3.4.2 Within 30 days of receiving the Request for Reconsideration form, the Director of Education or designate convenes a meeting of the Central Review Committee.
- 3.4.3 The Central Review Committee is established annually and consists of:
- The Director of Education or designate (Chair),
 - One trustee,
 - One elementary and one secondary representative from the Hamilton-Wentworth Principals' Council (HWPC)
 - One elementary teacher and one secondary teacher,
 - Two parent/community representatives.
- 3.4.4 The Central Review Committee receives presentations and consults with community representatives, "experts in the field", and various Board staff involved in the selection/approval process.
- 3.4.5 The selection criteria are applied to the resource in question to determine its current validity or appropriateness to the curriculum.
- 3.4.6 The Central Review Committee reaches a majority decision based on the selection criteria and the information presented to:
- Retain the learning resource and continue its use in the schools of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, or
 - Restrict the learning resource in use in some defined, limited way within the schools of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, or
 - Remove the learning resource from use entirely within the schools of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.
- 3.4.7 Within five days, the Chair of the Central Review Committee provides this decision in writing to all parties and to the Director of Education and Secretary of the Board. The community is then informed as deemed appropriate.
- 3.4.8 The decision is binding for two calendar years from the date of the decision.

*REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF
LEARNING RESOURCES
~ School Level ~*

School Name: _____

This form has been developed to provide space for comments.

Add extra pages, if necessary.

This form with relevant attachments will be forwarded to the school administrator and will be followed by an in-school conference.

Please address the following topics as fully as possible in order that this matter may be thoroughly reviewed.

1. Details of resource in questions (format, author, title, copyright date, curriculum connection):

2. Have you viewed or read the entire work? If not, what sections did you review. In the case of an organization or group, have all members viewed or read the entire work? If not, what sections were reviewed.

3. What is the nature of your concern? (Be specific, please.)

4. What do you believe is the main idea of this material?

5. In your opinion, does your concern eliminate all value the resource may have for your child? Other children? Why?

Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources – School Level

6. What do you feel may be the effect upon children who use this resource?

7. What do you feel may be of value in this resource?

8. In order to assist the selection procedure, please recommend other resources that you consider more appropriate.

9. What do you think would be a satisfactory resolution?

10. Do you have any other comments you wish to make?

Date: _____

Challenger's Name: _____

Challenger's Address: _____

Challenger's Phone number: _____

Challenger's Signature: _____

***RECOMMENDED FORMAT
FOR A CONFERENCE
AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL***

It is important to establish a positive environment for the school conference to occur. Creating a private space where all contributors feel comfortable is crucial. All participants should be made to feel welcome and properly introduced.

The following questions may assist administrators to facilitate conferences, especially where the Request for Reconsideration form has not been completed in full.

1. Do you have a child in a Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board school?
2. How was this resource drawn to your attention?
3. Do you represent an individual or a group? If you represent a group, which one?
4. What learning resource are you requesting be reconsidered?
 - format of resource (book, software application, film, magazine, etc.)
 - author
 - title
 - publisher
 - date
5.
 - a) Have you read or viewed the resource in its entirety?
 - b) Are you aware of its historical/social context?
6. What is the nature of your concern?
7. Have you discussed your concern regarding this resource with the teacher-librarian, your son's/daughter's teacher or the person using the resource? If so, what was the outcome?
8. Is this resource compulsory for use by your son/daughter? for use by students?
9. Do you believe that your concern eliminates all value this resource may have for your son/daughter? other students?
10. What would be a satisfactory resolution for you? Why?

For example:

 - continue using resource with the student(s) after context is explained
 - substitute another resource/other resources for the student(s)
 - restrict use of resource within the school
 - remove use of resource across the school system

Summary of Meeting with Challenger

Summary of decision:

- Resource in question will continue to be used in the school.
- Resource in question will be substituted with another/other resource(s).
- Resource in question will have restricted use in the school.
- Resource in question will be removed from this school/location.
- No resolution.
- Other _____

Date: _____

Challenger acknowledges receipt of a copy of this document.

School Administrator's Signature

Challenger's Signature

A copy of this summary document should be:

- 1) Provided to the challenger
- 2) Filed at the office of the school administrator.
- 3) Forwarded to the Director of Education and the appropriate Superintendents of Education accompanied by the Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources – School Level

APPENDIX IV

<p>REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LEARNING RESOURCES ~ System Level ~</p> <p>School Name: _____</p>
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This form has been developed to provide space for comments.

Add extra pages, if necessary.

This form with relevant attachments will be sent to:

**Director of Education
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
P.O. Box 2558
Hamilton, Ontario
L8N 3L1**

Title of Work:	_____
Author:	_____
Publisher:	_____
Date of Publication:	_____
Format of resource (book, video, film, magazine, etc.):	_____
Request submitted by:	_____ _____
City/Town:	_____
Postal Code:	_____
Telephone Number:	_____
The applicant represents:	<input type="checkbox"/> self <input type="checkbox"/> organization or group
Name of organization or group:	_____
Do you have a child in a Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board School?	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If YES, name of school:	_____ _____

Reconsideration of Learning Resources – System Level

Please address the following topics as fully as possible in order that this matter be thoroughly reviewed.

1. Please provide details (date, location, board personnel) of your previous in-school conference concerning this resource.
2. Please describe the explanation that you have been given for the use of this resource
3. Please describe the outcome of your conference with the school administrator about your concern.
4. What do you think would be a satisfactory resolution at the system level?
5. Do you have any other comments you wish to make?

Date: _____

Challenger's Name: _____

Challenger's Address: _____

Challenger's Phone number: _____

Challenger's Signature: _____