

SELECTION, VETTING AND REVIEW 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 HWDSB under the direction of the principal and/or supervisory officer, to consider the criteria listed below 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 (the ministry) to enrich and support the curriculum.

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

Where possible, staff should endeavour to include a variety of formats accessible to every student, including print, digital, multimedia, and technology. Content should include both Canadian learning resources representing the Canadian perspective, as well as locally relevant Indigenous resources that honour our role as treaty partners.

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

TERMINOLOGY:

Deselection: Commonly known as “weeding,” deselection is the systematic and continuous process of removing resources that no longer meet HWDSB’s selection criteria. Regular review of resources ensures students and staff have access to current, engaging, and relevant collections.

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 and Vetting of Learning Resources

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

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- 1.1.1 Relevance to the curriculum as outlined by the ministry, the Board and the school.
- 1.1.2 Support student engagement in learning and the development of Transferable Skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.
- 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 diversity of student interests, identities, and lived experiences.
- 1.1.5 Alignment with the HWDSB Human Rights and Equity and Inclusion policies.
- 1.1.6 Learning resources must promote fair treatment of individuals or groups and do not perpetuate discrimination and oppression that continue to have adverse impacts on the rights of individuals including, but not limited to ableism, ageism, antisemitism, biphobia, classism, homophobia, islamophobia, racism (including Anti Indigenous racism, Anti Black racism, Anti-Asian racism, and other specific forms of racism), sexism, transphobia, and other systems of oppression.
- 1.1.7 Current, accurate, authentic, and accountable content, especially when representing the identities, cultures, and experiences of Indigenous persons.
- 1.1.8 Well-written and organized, presented clearly and logically, with appropriate and high-quality illustrations, graphics, pictures, photographs, and artwork.
- 1.1.9 Available in alternative formats to meet the learning needs of every student (Universal Design for Learning).
- 1.1.10 High technical and aesthetic quality, designed for durability. The cost of the resource is justified for its intended use.
- 1.2 Professional staff should consult selection aids when considering new learning resources for purchase or when reviewing existing resources. Selection aids include:
 - i. Ministry of Education Curriculum Documents
 - ii. Ministry of Education Publications
 - iii. HWDSB Multi Year Strategic Plan
 - iv. Trillium Textbook List and the Guidelines for the Approval of Textbooks, 2008 document (www.trilliumlist.ca)
 - v. Professionally written or prepared reviews
 - vi. System Learning Commons Collection Development Guidelines
 - vii. Catalogues, resource guides, and the learning resource itself, when available

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- 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 Procedure for Challenging Learning Resources

Any member of the community has the right to express concern(s) about the use of a learning resource. Concerns will be considered based on compliance with the principles of selection and deselection, as presented in this procedure, through a reconsideration process. The person(s) requesting reconsideration must demonstrate how the identified resource fails to comply with the above established criteria. All requests will be treated objectively, in a consistent manner, with an understanding that:

- i. No parent/guardian has the right to determine reading, viewing, or listening matters for students other than their own.
- ii. The resource will be judged on its overall value and not by individual passages/parts pulled out of context.

There are two stages to the reconsideration procedure, as outline below. The first must be completed and documented before the next begins.

2.1 Challenging Learning Resources – School/Site Level

- 2.1.1 The challenge is directed to the Principal of the school where the resource is being used.
- 2.1.2 The Principal contacts their Superintendent of Student Achievement and the Manager, System Learning Commons.
- 2.1.3 The Manager, System Learning Commons, provides the Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources Site/School Form ([Appendix A](#)) and Request for Reconsideration Summary of the meeting to the challenger ([Appendix C](#)).
- 2.1.4 The Principal provides a copy of the Selection, Vetting, and Review of Learning Materials and Applications Procedure to the challenger as well as the Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources Site/School Form ([Appendix A](#)).
- 2.1.5 The Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources Site/School Form ([Appendix A](#)) 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.

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- 2.1.6 The Principal will review the challenge and the resource alongside the Selection, Vetting, and Review of Learning Materials and Applications Procedure.
- 2.1.7 The Principal may consult the Manager, System Learning Commons, and the Superintendent of Program if there have been previous, documented challenges to the same resource in HWDSB.
- 2.1.8 The Principal holds a school conference with all parties concerned and objections are heard/read. At this time, the challenger may outline the concerns that initiated the challenge.
- 2.1.9 The Principal decides:
 - 2.1.9.1 To retain the resource for its present use, explaining the decision by describing the resource's intended educational use, and identifying the selection principles and criteria that it meets, or
 - 2.1.9.2 To substitute an alternate resource, (e.g., an item is removed as required text, and retained as an elective resource), or
 - 2.1.9.3 To retain the resource for limited use (e.g., for a particular grade level).
- 2.1.10 The Principal provides the Request for Reconsideration Summary of the meeting to the challenger ([Appendix C](#)). A copy is kept on file in the school office and another copy is forwarded to the Director of Education, the school Superintendent of Student Achievement, and Manager, System Learning Commons for appropriate action.
- 2.1.11 If the challenge is resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, no further action is necessary. If the challenge is not resolved, reconsideration of the resource may proceed at the System level.

3.0 Challenging Learning Resources – System Level

- 3.1 When the challenge is elevated to the Director of Education, the Principal contacts the Superintendent of Student Achievement and the Manager, System Learning Commons.
- 3.2 The Manager, System Learning Commons provides a Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources System Form ([Appendix B](#)).
- 3.3 The Principal provides a copy of the Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources System Form ([Appendix B](#)), which must be completed by the challenger before the system conference.

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- 3.4 No consideration of the complaint will be granted until this form has been completed and returned to Principal. The completed forms are forwarded to the Director of Education.
- 3.5 Within 30 days of receiving the completed System Level Form, the Director of Education or designate convenes a meeting of a review committee.
- 3.6 A review committee will be selected by the Director of Education or designate and consist of:
 - 3.6.1 The Director of Education or designate (Chair).
 - 3.6.2 One trustee selected in consultation with the Chair of the Board.
 - 3.6.3 One Student Trustee or member of Student Senate.
 - 3.6.4 One elementary and one secondary representative from the Hamilton-Wentworth Principals' Council (HWPC).
 - 3.6.5 One elementary educator and one secondary educator, selected by their employee groups.
 - 3.6.6 A representative from one of the Indigenous Educational Wellness, Equity, and/or Human Rights departments.
 - 3.6.7 Two parent/guardian/caregiver/community representatives selected from the Parent Involvement Committee.
- 3.7 Each committee member, and the requester, will receive:
 - 3.7.1 The completed Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources-School/Site form ([Appendix A](#)).
 - 3.7.2 The completed Request for Reconsideration Summary ([Appendix C](#)).
 - 3.7.3 The completed Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources System Form ([Appendix B](#)).
 - 3.7.4 Related Ministry of Education publications.
 - 3.7.5 A history of challenges for the resource in question.
 - 3.7.6 Pertinent HWDSB document.

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- 3.7.7 A collection of current academic/professional literature on the resource in question.
- 3.8 In advance of the initial meeting, all committee members will read/view/listen to the resource in question.
- 3.9 At the initial meeting, the committee will apply the selection criteria to the resource to determine its validity. The Review Committee may call upon the advice of a person or persons from the community, as well as Board staff involved in the selection/approval process.
- 3.10 Only review committee members have voting privileges.
- 3.11 The review committee reaches a majority decision based on the selection criteria and the information presented to:
 - 3.11.1 Retain the learning resource and continue its use in the schools of HWDSB, or
 - 3.11.2 Restrict the learning resource in use in some defined, limited way within the schools of HWDSB, or
 - 3.11.3 Remove the learning resource from use entirely within the schools of HWDSB.
- 3.12 Within five days of the decision, the Chair of the review committee provides the decision in writing to:
 - 3.12.1 All parties involved at both the Site/School and System-level.
 - 3.12.2 The Director of Education.
 - 3.12.3 Manager, System Learning Commons
 - 3.12.4 The Superintendent of Program.
 - 3.12.5 The community is informed as deemed appropriate.
- 3.13 The decision is binding for two calendar years from the date of the decision.

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APPENDIX A: Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources Site/School Form

REQUESTER		
Name:		
Telephone:		
Home Address:		
The applicant represents:	<input type="checkbox"/> Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization/Group
Name of organization or group:		
Do you have a child in a HWDSB School?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name of school:		

RESOURCE		
Complete this area for print resources		
Title:	Publisher:	
Author:	Copyright Date:	
Complete this area for multimedia or virtual resources.		
Title/Name:	Type of Resource	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	eBook/eAudio
Date Accessed:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multimedia
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Database

Please answer the following questions:	
What is your request?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Withdraw permanently	<input type="checkbox"/> Restrict use
Have you read, viewed, or listened to the entire item?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If no, what sections have you reviewed?	

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What concerns do you have about this resource? Please be specific.
In your opinion, what is the main idea conveyed through this resource?
How does this resource meet the criteria for selection, as outlined in this document?
How does this resource NOT meet the criteria for selection, as outlined in this document?
What are the merits of this resource?

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What reviews or analysis of this resource have you read? Where possible, please attach those consulted.	
Please suggest alternative resources that meet the selection criteria that you consider to be appropriate.	
Requester's Signature:	
Date Submitted:	

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APPENDIX B: Request for Reconsideration of Learning Resources System Form

REQUESTER		
Name:		
Telephone:		
Home Address:		
The applicant represents:	<input type="checkbox"/> Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization/Group
Name of organization or group:		
Do you have a child in a HWDSB School?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name of school:		

RESOURCE		
Complete this area for print resources		
Title:	Publisher:	
Author:	Copyright Date:	
Complete this area for multimedia or virtual resources.		
Title/Name:	Type of Resource	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	eBook/eAudio
Date Accessed:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multimedia
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Database

Please answer the following questions:	
What is your request?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Withdraw permanently	<input type="checkbox"/> Restrict use
Have you read, viewed, or listened to the entire item?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If no, what sections have you reviewed?	

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Please provide details (date, location, board personnel present) of your previous resource meeting.	
Describe the explanation that you were given for the use of this resource.	
Describe the outcome of your meeting with the school Principal about your concern.	
What do you think would be a satisfactory resolution at the system level?	
Do you have any other comments you wish to make?	
Requester's Signature:	
Date Submitted:	

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APPENDIX C: Request for Reconsideration Summary

This form is to be completed at the conclusion of each stage of the procedure.

REQUESTER		
Name:		
Telephone:		
Home Address:		
The applicant represents:	<input type="checkbox"/> Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Organization/Group
Name of organization or group:		
Do you have a child in a HWDSB School?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name of school:		

RESOURCE		
Complete this area for print resources		
Title:	Publisher:	
Author:	Copyright Date:	
Complete this area for multimedia or virtual resources.		
Title/Name:	Type of Resource	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	eBook/eAudio
Date Accessed:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Multimedia
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Database

RECONSIDERATION STAGE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Stage 2
Outcome report submitted by:	
Name:	Position:
Location:	Date:

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STAGE 1: Site/School Level - Completed only if the challenged resource is restricted in its use.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Withdraw permanently	<input type="checkbox"/> Restrict use
Reasons for agreeing with the request to restrict the use of or withdraw the resource:	

STAGE 2: System Level - Completed and submitted regardless of decision.	
Review Committee Membership [name and position]:	
Meeting Date(s):	
Decision:	
<input type="checkbox"/> No change to status of the resource	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdraw permanently
<input type="checkbox"/> Restrict use (provide details):	
Rationale for decision:	
Name of Submitter:	
Signature of Submitter:	
Date Submitted:	

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When submitting this form:
Attach a copy of the letter sent to the requestor; and,
Attach the original Request for Reconsideration of a Learning Resources-Site/School form (Appendix A); and
Attach the original Request for Reconsideration of a Learning Resources-System form (Appendix B)