

Swan River Montessori Charter School

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606.5 LIBRARY MATERIALS

I. PURPOSE

This policy guides the selection of instructional texts, library resources, and materials within Swan River Montessori Charter School (SRMCS).

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The SRMCS School Board acknowledges that selecting instructional texts and materials is a critical aspect of the school's curriculum and library program. The School Board affirms its authority to make final decisions regarding the selection of all instructional and library materials.

The charter school board recognizes that library materials serve as a vital component of a student's education by enriching the breadth of the curriculum as a whole and meeting the needs and interests of individual students. The purpose of library materials is to meet the needs of all students. Therefore, questions regarding selection and reconsideration of library materials should be handled differently than those concerning textbooks and instructional materials.

To ensure that library materials fulfill this role, the charter school board delegates to the executive director or the executive director's designee responsibility for administering a process for selection of library materials. Responsibility for selection shall rest with professionally trained charter school staff, with recognition that the school board has the final authority on selection of library materials. Parents and guardians have the right and the responsibility to determine their children's access to library materials.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Library" is the charter school resource that holds the library collection that serves the information and independent reading needs of students and supports the curriculum needs of teachers and staff. The term "library" includes a school library media center. The term also includes access to electronic materials.

For charter schools with multiple school buildings, the term "library" refers to the resource within a specific school building.

Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.991, states that a charter school library or library media center provides equitable and free access to students, teachers, and administrators and that a school library or school library media center must have the following characteristics:

1. ensures every student has equitable access to resources and is able to locate, access, and use resources that are organized and cataloged;
2. has a collection development plan that includes but is not limited to materials selection and deselection, a challenged materials procedure, and an intellectual and academic freedom statement;
3. is housed in a central location that provides an environment for expanded learning and supports a variety of student interests;
4. has technology and Internet access; and
5. is served by a licensed school library media specialist or licensed school librarian.

- B. "Library collection" consists of the library materials made available to students.
- C. "Library materials" are the books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, prints, documents, videotapes, subscription content, electronic and digital materials (including e-books, audiobooks, and databases), and related items made available to students in a school building or through access to electronic materials. This term does not include materials made available to students as part of the curriculum.
- D. "Library media specialist" is a teacher holding a Library Media Specialist teaching license issued by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Boards and who is trained to deliver library services to students and staff in a library. A library media specialist is authorized under Minnesota Rules to provide to students in kindergarten through grade 12 instruction that is designed to provide information and technology literacy skills instruction, to lead, collaborate, and consult with other classroom teachers for the purpose of integrating information and technology literacy skills with content teaching, and to administer media center operations, programming, and resources.

[NOTE: The specific titles of the charter school's library staff should be used for this definition and substituted for "library media specialist" throughout this model policy. Please note the new 2024 law in Article IV regarding administration of selection and reconsideration procedures.]

IV. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

While the SRMCS School Board retains ultimate authority in selecting instructional texts and materials, it recognizes the importance of professional staff expertise in making recommendations. The School Board delegates this responsibility to the Executive Director or their designee. The School Board will periodically request updates from the Executive Director regarding the use of this authority.

The Executive Director or their designee is responsible for creating procedures and guidelines to ensure an efficient, transparent, and inclusive process for reviewing and recommending instructional and library materials. These guidelines will provide opportunities for input from students, parents, and the broader community and may involve advisory committees in coordination with curriculum and library development efforts.

- A. The charter school board recognizes the expertise of the charter school's professional staff and the vital need of such staff to be responsible for selection of library materials.
- B. While recommendations by administrators, faculty members, students, parents, and other community members may be considered, the final responsibility for selection of library materials shall rest with the library media specialist.
- C. The procedures for selection and reconsideration set forth in this policy will be administered by:
 - 1. a licensed library media specialist under Minnesota Rules, part 8710.4550;
 - 2. an individual with a master's degree in library science or library and information science; or
 - 3. a professional librarian or a person trained in library collection management.
- D. The charter school board may decline to purchase, lend, or shelve or remove access to library materials legitimately based on:
 - 1. practical reasons, including but not limited to shelf space limitations, rare or antiquarian status, damage, or obsolescence;

2. legitimate pedagogical concerns, including but not limited to the appropriateness of potentially sensitive topics for the library's intended audience, the selection of library materials for a curated collection, or the likelihood of causing a material and substantial disruption of the work and discipline of the school; or
3. compliance with state or federal law.

IV. SELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

A. Selection Criteria

In the selection process, professional staff will prioritize materials that:

1. Align with SRMCS academic standards.
2. Are appropriate for the age and maturity levels of students.
3. Encourage respect for cultural diversity and differing opinions.
4. Conform to the school's budgetary constraints.
5. Are primarily in English, with exceptions for world language courses or statutory requirements (Minn. Stat. § 124D.61).
6. Allow for the study of foundational American documents, including those that contributed to the creation and preservation of the nation's representative government, the Bill of Rights, its free-market system, and national pride.
7. Avoid censorship of American or Minnesota history based on religious references in original documents, speeches, writings, or proclamations.

The library materials selection process should result in a library collection that, when considered as a whole, is consistent with the following criteria:

1. Library materials shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the state and the charter school and the aims and objectives of individual schools and specific courses;
2. Library materials shall be chosen to enrich and support the curriculum as well as to promote reading for pleasure by responding to the personal needs and interests of student users;
3. Library materials shall not be excluded because of the race, nationality, religion, sex, gender, or political views of the writer;
4. Library materials shall be appropriate to and reflect the needs, ages, maturity level, emotional development, ability levels, learning styles, social development, background, diversity, and needs and interests of the students for whom the materials were selected;
5. Library materials shall meet high standards of quality in one or more of these categories (presented alphabetically):
 - a. Artistic quality and/or literary style;
 - b. Authenticity;
 - c. Critical thinking;
 - d. Educational significance;
 - e. Factual content;
 - f. High interest for the intended audience; and

- g. Readability.
- 6. The selection of library materials shall conform to the constraints of the charter school budget.
- B. The library media specialist shall consult sources and specialists experienced in library materials collections appropriate for the building's students and that are reputable, experienced, unbiased, and professionally trained in school library materials.
- C. The executive director or the executive director's designee shall be responsible for keeping the school board informed of progress on review and selection of each building's library materials.
- D. Library materials that are outdated, inaccurate, no longer useful for curricular support or reading enrichment, or have not been utilized for an extended period of time may be removed. Library materials that are in poor physical condition may be removed or replaced as determined by the library media specialist or the principal.
- E. Gifts and Donations of Library Materials

Materials offered for donation or gifted to a school library may be accepted if they comply with the library collection selection criteria and approved by the library media specialist. The charter school's libraries welcome donations of books and other resource materials from individuals and organizations, but also reserve the right to decline to accept library materials that do not meet the criteria for selection. In addition, financial donations to benefit charter school's libraries will be accepted with the understanding that funds will be used to purchase materials that are needed for libraries based on the needs of the individual schools.

Controversial Issues

Controversial issues may be addressed at SRMCS if the following criteria are met:

1. The issue is relevant to the course of study or current events and offers opportunities for critical thinking, empathy, and understanding different viewpoints.
 2. The issue is meaningful to students' concerns.
 3. Sufficient factual information is available to present alternative viewpoints.
 4. All perspectives are fairly represented and supported by established facts.
 5. The issue can be understood and defined by students.
 6. Staff do not use their position to express personal religious, political, economic, or social biases with the intent to persuade students.
 7. Discussions arise from students, current events, or established curriculum—not from external sources.
 8. Discussions respect all individuals, avoiding negative portrayals based on protected classes as outlined in SRMCS Policy 413.
 9. Presentations (oral or written) comply with state and federal laws.
- The Executive Director has the authority to assess whether these conditions are met.

V. INDIVIDUAL STUDENT ACCESS TO SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL

A parent or guardian may request that access to specific material in the library materials collection be restricted from their student. The school shall take reasonable steps to fulfill this request. This type of request will not result in removal of specific library collection material from the library or restrictions upon any other student accessing specific library materials.

VI. RECONSIDERATION OF SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL

- A. The school board seeks to uphold students' access to library materials that meet the educational goals and selection criteria set forth in this policy.
- B. A charter school employee, student, or a parent or guardian of a charter school student may request reconsideration of specific library material on the basis of appropriateness. Access to the material in question shall not be restricted until the procedures listed below have been fully completed and a decision to remove or restrict the materials has been made.

[NOTE: The school board may decide whether to allow a building principal to remove library materials pending completion of the reconsideration process.]

C. Informal Request for Reconsideration of Specific Library Material

- 1. Requests for reconsideration of specific library material shall be directed to the library media specialist and the building principal. The building principal and the library media specialist shall assume responsibility for processing the request on an informal basis.
- 2. The building principal and/or the library media specialist shall provide an explanation to the individual who submitted the request. The explanation shall include the particular selection criteria that the material in question met in order to be included in the library as curriculum support or as an independent reading choice for students in the building.
- 3. If the request is not resolved informally, the principal shall submit a report on the matter to the executive director or the executive director's designee. The requestor will have an option to initiate a Formal Request for Reconsideration.

D. Formal Request for Reconsideration of Specific Library Collection Material

- 1. A Formal Request for Reconsideration of specific library material is initiated upon submission of a completed *Formal Request for Reconsideration of Specific Library Collection Material* form. The form must be completed in its entirety for each work that is subject to a request for reconsideration. The principal shall notify the executive director or the executive director's designee and the library media specialist of receipt of a completed Formal Request form.

If specific library material is the subject of a Formal Request for Reconsideration and a final decision is made to retain the specific library material, then the specific library material shall not be subject to additional requests for reconsideration for three (3) years following the date of final resolution of the initial Formal Request for Reconsideration.

- 2. On an annual basis, the Executive director or the executive director's designee shall appoint a Library Materials Review Committee (Review Committee). This committee shall include:
 - a. One member of the charter school administration
 - b. Library Media Specialist
- 3. The Review Committee shall establish a date upon which it will discuss the request and whether the specific library collection material conforms to the selection criteria set forth in this policy.
- 4. The Review Committee

- a. may consult individuals, organizations, and other resources with relevant professional knowledge on school library material;
 - b. shall examine the specific library material as a whole;
 - c. shall examine the specific library material as to its conformance with the criteria for selection of library materials; and
 - d. shall submit a written report to the executive director or the executive director's designee containing the Review Committee's decision on whether to retain, to remove, or to take other action regarding the specific library material.
5. The executive director or the executive director's designee shall inform the requestor and the school board of the Review Committee's decision. The requestor may appeal the Review Committee's decision to the executive director or the executive director's designee by submitting a written appeal to the executive director or the executive director's designee within fourteen (14) days of submission of the Review Committee's decision to the requestor. The executive director or the executive director's designee shall provide a written decision on a requestor's appeal within a reasonable time period.
6. The requestor shall have the right to appeal the decision of the executive director or the executive director's designee to the school board.

VII. CHALLENGE REPORT

Upon the completion of a content challenge or reconsideration process in accordance with this policy, the charter school board must submit a report of the challenge to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education that includes:

- A. the title, author, and other relevant identifying information about the material being challenged;
- B. the date, time, and location of any public hearing held on the challenge in question, including minutes or transcripts;
- C. the result of the challenge or reconsideration request; and
- D. accurate and timely information on who from the charter school the Minnesota Department of Education may contact with questions or follow-up.

VIII. PROHIBITION ON RETALIATION

The charter school may not discriminate against or discipline an employee for complying with Minnesota Statutes, section 134.51.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120A.22, Subd. 9 (Compulsory Instruction)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.02 (General Powers of Independent School Districts)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.09 (School Board Responsibilities)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.991 (Public School Libraries and Media Centers)
Minn. Stat. § 134.51 (Access to Library Materials and Rights Protected)
Minn. Rules Part 8710.4550 (Library Media Specialists)
Bd. of Educ., Island Trees Union Free Sch. Dist. No. 26 v. Pico, 457 U.S. 853 (1982)
Virginia State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624, 642 (1943)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 524 (Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 606 (Textbooks and Instructional Materials)