Guidelines for the Selection and Approval of Instructional Materials

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Criteria for the Selection of Instructional Materials

General Criteria

The most important objective is to locate and make available for students and staff members instructional materials that support and achieve the school system's principle goals. To assist those persons selecting materials, certain general criteria must be applied to anything purchased, given, loaned, or rented for instructional use.

1. Materials should support the curricular goals of the school system and individual school programs.

2. Materials should be interesting, accurate, stimulating, and contain content that is significant.

3. The concepts presented should be within the understanding of students who will use the materials and provide for a diversity of interests and levels of ability.

4. Materials should be well-balanced according to the content areas of the curriculum, be varied according to the type of media, and provide for a diversity of interests and levels of ability.

5.   Materials should contribute to lifelong learning by widening boundaries of thought presenting a realistic picture of life, developing an understanding of people, and fostering positive values.

6.   Materials should have a format, style, and presentation of high quality and be appropriate to expression of the idea, concept, or lesson.

7.   Materials should present different points of view.

8.   Materials should justify the cost in relation to anticipated use.

9.   Materials should be kept current.

10.   Principles of learning should have been followed and incorporated in the development of the materials.

11.   Technology-based instructional products must provide students with disabilities equivalent access unless this causes significant difficulty or expense.

Criteria for Books

In selecting a book, three primary considerations must be made:

(1) What is the purpose, theme, message of the book?
(2) How well is this purpose accomplished?
(3) For whom is the book intended?

After answering these three questions, the following criteria must be used as guidelines for the selection of instructional materials. A curriculum specialist will follow appropriate procedures for adoption when instructional materials conform to a majority of the applicable criteria for selection.

		Yes	No	N/A
1.	**Purpose**			
	Does the book promote the educational goals and objectives of the curricula of Frederick County Public Schools?			
	Does the book offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievement and problems of the reader and/or other people?			
2.	**Author and Publisher**			

	Is the author qualified?			
	Is the publisher reputable?			
3.	**Content**			
	Does a book about modern times give a realistic picture of life today?			
	Does the book avoid an oversimplified view of life?			
	Does the book avoid religious, sexual, or other cultural biases?			
	Are the facts presented accurately?			
	Is the book objective in presentation?			
	Are the concepts presented appropriate to the ability and maturity of the potential reader?			
	Does the book have logical plot construction and/or development?			
	Does the book consistently reflect the time and setting presented?			
	Are information sources well documented?			
	Are translations and retellings faithful to the original?			
	Are characters created with individual human qualities?			
	Is the language appropriate to the treatment of the topic?			
	Does the book have literary value?			
	Does the book reflect concerns of significance to society?			
	Is the book of interest to its intended audience?			
	Does the book make a significant contribution to the history of literature of ideas?			
	Have the principles of learning been followed in the development of the book?			
	Are student aids to learning provided if appropriate?			
	Is the index adequate?			
	Do the visual aids.contribute to the development of the book?			
	Is the copyright date a significant factor in evaluating the usefulness of the content?			

[Criteria for Digital Resources](#)

To be used for evaluation of Databases and Reference eBooks.
Please use linked resource when evaluating a new resource for FCPS or your school.

I. Appropriateness	Yes	No
1. Is the content appropriate for intended audience(s), (e.g., age, maturity, and intellectual levels) and multiple grade levels?		
2. Does it effectively support targeted standards, curriculum, and/or learning outcomes?		
3. Is it presented in a manner to stimulate interest and curiosity?		
4. Is it presented to enhance readability for intended audience? Items to consider are the sentence length and structure, paragraphs with topic and clear purpose, vocabulary, and text meaning enhanced with illustrations, graphics, and multimedia.		
5. Does the format/layout enhance readability and legibility? Items to consider are font style and size, line spacing, foreground and background colors, headings and subheadings, adequate "white space" around text.		
6. Does the publisher make known the readability scale for the work as a whole or its parts? Consider which one was used and whether there is an interpretation given.		
Comments:		

II. Scope	Yes	No
1. Is it of sufficient scope to effectively cover the subject(s) or intended purpose of the database?		
2. Does the use of links enhance the scope of the resource?		
3. Does it include additional online resources for teachers and students?		
4. Does it duplicate other available resources? If so, is there a benefit in terms of value to cost ratio?		
5. Does it include a dictionary and/or thesaurus linked to the content?		
6. Do they provide citation information in MLA and/or APA format?		
Comments:		

III. Accuracy	Yes	No
1. Is the information authoritative? Items to consider: Are the author(s) or editor(s) acknowledged experts in the subject? Is it distributed/aggregated by a reputable publisher? Does the publisher make known what information sources the database is based on?		
2. Is it accurate, reliable, and free of bias and stereotyping?		
3. Is it updated frequently?		
4. Do the links within the content take the reader to relevant, reliable, and appropriate information? Items to consider are the following: Do they enhance meaning of the text? Are links missing that should be included?		
5. How often are links checked and updated?		
6. Is it free of grammatical and mechanical errors?		
Comments:		

IV. Accessibility	Yes	No
1. Is remote access included in the license agreement?		
2. Does the home screen load quickly?		
3. Does the user get an immediate sense of "orientation" to the essential parts of the home screen, e.g., contents, search box, navigation aids, main body of text, how to use/help features?		
4. Is there a text to speech feature? Items to consider: Is this feature easy to find? Is this feature easy to use – e.g., one click to activate?		
5. If there is a text to speech feature, is the voice reader understandable and as close to a real voice as technology permits?		
6. Does it conform to Web Accessibility provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act? Is the information accessible to those using non-graphical browsers or text reading software?		
7. Is the content available in other languages?		
8. Is there a text to speech feature for languages other than English?		
9. Can it be viewed effectively on different browsers on various platforms?		
Comments:		

V. Design and Presentation	Yes	No
1. Is it user friendly? Is it organized as simply as it can be to serve the intended purpose and audience?		
2. Does it adhere to effective design principles, e.g., color scheme, textures, legible fonts, white space, contrast between background and text, descriptive titles and subtitles, navigation aids?		
3. Are the screen displays concise and uncluttered?		
4. Do the graphics and multimedia contribute to understanding the text? Do they avoid distracting the reader with flashing images and text "noise" and advertisements?		
Comments:		

VI. Navigation	Yes	No
1. Does it include navigational aids such as icons, buttons, pull-down menus, bars, directional symbols, contents menu, help, site index?		
2. Are the navigational aids intuitive and effective in order to move the user easily around the resource and foster independent use?		
3. Do the links work?		
4. Is the number of links reasonable in order to direct the user quickly to the needed information? More than three clicks are too many!		
5. Are labels, captions, headings, subheadings and other text features used to enhance understanding of images, graphics, or blocks of text?		
Comments:		

VII. Search Input	Yes	No
1. Are there multiple search methods that can be used (Boolean or natural language processing)?		
2. Can the user search by keyword, subject, title, phrase and will it search through the entire text, i.e., the whole article, titles and abstracts?		
3. Can the user apply useful limits such as year(s) or document type?		
4. Can the search be revised? Can the search forms be easily cleared?		
5. Can search terms be truncated?		

	Yes	No
6. Does the user have access to an "advanced search" option?		
7. Will spelling errors limit search results? Will the user be prompted about the misspelling? Is the search engine intuitive enough to search for word anyway?		
8. Can you select or deselect media type? (i.e., just choose magazines or newspapers or video, etc. as applicable)		
Comments		

VII. Search Output	Yes	No
1. Are search results ranked (high to low relevance)?		
2. Can the user adjust the qualifiers to limit the results desired?		
3. Are the search results displayed in an easily readable format?		
5. Can search results be sorted?		
6. Can the search results include abstracts and full text as applicable?		
7. Can search results be saved or marked for later retrieval?		
8. Are search words or concepts highlighted within the text of the search results?		
9. Do search results highlight the search term?		
10. Can search results be emailed?		
11. Can the search results be bookmarked?		
12. Can the search results be downloaded?		
13. Can the search results be shared on a learning management system such as Google Classroom, Canvas, Blackboard, or Moodle?		
14. What print options available, e.g., print selected text, entire document, print-friendly format, download and print later?		
15. Can the search strategy be saved as an "alert" sent as an email prompt to the searcher, e.g., when new content is added, the searcher is alerted.		
Comments:		

IX. Administrative Considerations	Yes	No

1. Is the site approved for media funding?		
2. Is it available to be used by multiple grade levels?		
3. Is the purpose and intent of the site published?		
4. Are there published reviews from authoritative sources?		
5. Is there a privacy policy statement?		
6. Are copyright policies explained?		
7. Is technical support easily accessed, e.g., email, telephone, help files?		
8. Is there are published selection policy available?		
9. Does the vendor offer access choices such as IP authentication, user ID and password, Single Sign-On, mobile phone application?		
10. Are user statistics available from the vendor/publisher?		
11. Does the vendor/publisher provide ample information regarding pricing schedules, special group pricing, or any state consortium agreements in order to make an informed and cost-effective purchasing decision?		
12. Is a schedule of upgrades provided?		
13. Does the vendor/publisher provide free staff development either face to face, webinar or through its website?		

Modified from MDK12 Criteria
http://rfms-referencewebsite.weebly.com/uploads/2/8/3/5/28354669/mdk12_evaluation_criteria.pdf

FCPS 2016

Criteria for Library Media Materials

Library media materials shall be selected from standard, authoritative, bibliographic references using the criteria established in the guidelines. Those materials vary in level of difficulty, format, title, and subject, and usually are purchased in single copies. It is impractical to provide copies of these materials for preview before purchase because of a lack of space for display, time, staff required, and cost of additional preview copies.

Representative List of Bibliographic Sources and Review Journals. A favorable review or listing of any title in one of the following reviewing journals or bibliographic sources constitutes approval of the title for addition to media center collections in the Frederick

County public schools.

Graphic novels and manga may be purchased at the elementary and middle school level if they have a positive review OR are nominated for a Black Eyed Susan award OR are rated "All Ages" or "Y" by the publisher if it is Manga or Graphic Novel.

Exceptions - if an individual wants to consider a book that doesn't fit these criteria they will fill out the google sheet requesting it be reviewed by our group.

Titles			
AAAS Science Books and Films	Alan Review	American Association of School Librarians	American Biology Teacher
American Library	Book Links	Booklist	Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
Childhood Education	Children's Book Council (Children's Choices)	Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)	French Review
German Quarterly Hispania	Horn Book Magazine	Journal of Aesthetic Education	Journal of Geography
Kirkus Reviews	KLIATT	Library Journal	Pura Belpré Medal Books
Caldecott Medal and Honor Books	Middle & Junior High Core Collection	Modern Language Journal	Newbery Medal and Honor Books
New York Times Book Review Section	Physics Teachers	Publishers Weekly	Reading Teacher
School Library Connection	School Library Journal	Children's Notable Lists	Science Books and Films
Scientific American	Teaching Exceptional Children	Video Librarian Online	Voice of Youth Advocates

Plays

1. General Standards
   a. Any school-sponsored productions which is deemed as follows, shall not be presented:

       i.   Lewd, vulgar, obscene;
      ii.   Libelous or slanderous;
    iii.   Constitutes an unwarranted invasion of privacy or has the intent to harass, threaten or intimidate;
    iv.   Violates federal or state law;
     v.   Incites students to create a clear and present danger of the commission of an unlawful act;
    vi.   A violation of any Board policies or FCPS regulations;
  vii.   A substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the public school.

b. Principals shall make known to students system-wide guidelines for school sponsored productions. Such information shall be included in the student handbook given to each student.

c. The instructor shall provide a student contract outlining rehearsal/set construction/production dates and times. The contract shall include procedures for missed rehearsals/productions. The contract should be signed by student and parent/guardian. Additional rehearsals may be added as needed, but students can not be penalized if they are not available.

d. The school principal, or designee, in consultation with the teacher and appropriate curriculum specialist, will review productions that may be deemed in violation of standards as outlined in Board Policy 436 and take action accordingly. Such decision may be appealed in accordance with Board Policy 105.

2. Considerations

a) The play should have a worthwhile theme, be sincere and true in its interpretation of life, and accurate in its reflection of customs and manners.

b) It should have literary value, be written in acceptable language and in accordance with accepted standards of play writing and, be emotionally and intellectually stimulating.

c) It should be within the capacities of the students to understand, interpret, and appreciate. The influence of vicarious experience and the students' natural interests should be taken into consideration.

d) It should challenge the highest creative and artistic abilities of all who are associated with its production, thereby affording rich opportunities for study, analysis, and experimentation.e) It should be quality theatre, which affords opportunities for sincere acting, satisfying entertainment, growth in theatre appreciation, and expansion of perceptions and knowledge.

f) Is the play adaptable to the physical equipment and schedule of the school in which it will be produced?

g) Does the play make unreasonable demands upon the play production budget and personnel?

h) Does the play fit in well with the plays which have preceded it and those which will follow it, so as to offer variety to the year's production schedule?

i) Does the play afford opportunities for participation of students based on the educational goals as determined by the instructor?

j) Does the play come within the interests and qualifications of the teacher upon whom the responsibility for producing it is placed?

3. Procedures

       a) Each school administration, working with the instructor, should read and review the play to ensure appropriateness for that school community.

       b) If administration and instructor deem it appropriate, an appeal may be submitted to the Secondary Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Specialist for approval.

Criteria for Career Education Materials

CTE teachers are asked to contact the CTE Supervisor or Coordinator when considering the incorporation of new curricular materials that will significantly impact instruction. Due to the vast differences in CTE programs and program standards, the following criteria may be used for evaluation.

1. Alignment to curricular standards.

2. Systemic compatibility

3. Recommendations from the Program Advisory Committee.

4. Absence of sex-role stereotyping, racial discrimination, and occupational denigration.

5. Ease of reproduction and use by teachers with a minimum of additional in-service preparation.

Specialized Criteria

Areas Delineated by the Public School Laws of Maryland. According to Bylaw 13A.04.05.01-03, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has developed and distributed to all local school systems Guidelines for the Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials Which Will Insure Proper Recognition of Ethnic and Cultural Minorities. In Bylaw 13A.04.01.02 the MSDE requires each local school system to establish procedures for evaluating and selecting printed and audiovisual materials to be used in all phases of Family Life and Human Development programs. The Maryland State Department of Education has also developed procedures "for ensuring the elimination of sex stereotyping in print and nonprint materials of all Ethnic and Cultural groups" as directed by the resolution 1974-48.