

Colchester School Board

Meeting Agenda and Packet

February 20, 2024

**Colchester School District
Board of Education Meeting Agenda
February 20, 2024 - 7:00 P.M.
Colchester High School Library**

Agenda

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Citizen Participation**
- III. First Reading of Materials & Instructional Activity Selection and Review Policy: G5** **Action**
- IV. First Reading of Library Materials Policy (New)** **Action**
- V. Recording of FY'25 Budget Q&A for LCATV** **Information**
- VI. Approval of Consent Agenda** **Action**
- VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes** **Action**
 - February 6, 2024 (general)
- VIII. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports** **Information**
- IX. Future Agenda Items** **Information**
- X. Adjournment**

***Meeting Participation and Viewing Options**

Meetings are open to the public unless warned otherwise. Colchester citizens have an opportunity to speak or comment on any items listed on the agenda. For topics not listed on the agenda, public comment can be made during the Citizen's Participation agenda item. Please review the Public Comment Rules listed at www.csdvt.org/schoolboard prior to the meeting. If not attending in person, citizens may also participate in the meeting by emailing a prerecorded message to schoolboard@colchesters.org with "Citizens Participation" listed in the subject line. It must be received by noon on the day of the meeting, include your full name and phone number, and follow the Public Comment Rules. LCATV will provide live stream coverage via: www.lcatv.org/live-stream-3.

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: MATERIALS AND INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY SELECTION, AND REVIEW POLICY

DATE ADOPTED: April 6, 2004

PHILOSOPHY

It is the policy of the Colchester School District that all educational materials and instructional activities used in our schools will appropriately reflect the Mission Statement of the Colchester School District.

SELECTION OF MATERIALS

RESPONSIBILITY:

1. The Board of Education is responsible for all matters relating to the operation of schools in the Colchester School District. Instruction materials should present opposing sides of controversial issues, so that with guidance young citizens may develop critical thinking. Instruction materials should be representative of different racial, religious, ethnic and cultural groups, emphasizing their valuable contribution to American heritage and should be free from sex role stereotyping to the extent possible.
2. The Board of Education delegates authority for the selection of educational materials and instructional activities to professional personnel. Decisions to purchase shall be based on the recommendations of media specialists, teachers, and/or principals with final approval by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.
3. Information regarding any new classroom texts, library books, and/or other educational materials will be made available to parents and/or community members.

PROCEDURES FOR CURRICULA, CO-CURRICULA, AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR MATERIALS:

1. Curriculum task groups or academic departments are delegated the responsibility of selecting basic textbooks and materials for the instructional program. Whenever appropriate to the program/activity, general criteria for selection will include:
 - Relevance to Curriculum Objectives
 - Readability
 - Clarity and Organization
 - Suitability of Methods/Processes
 - Teacher Resources Available
 - Provision for Individual Differences
 - Cost

Date Warned: March 19, 2004
 First Reading: March 23, 2004
 Second Reading: April 6, 2004

- Durability
- Timeliness
- Reputation of Author
- Suitability for Age Group

In their review process, such groups will examine materials from several publishers using the criteria listed above. These groups may seek input from other teachers, administrators, librarians, students or parents. The decision to allocate funds for purchasing books will be based on staff recommendations and the approval of the building principal.

2. Teachers and advisors are delegated the responsibility of selecting supplementary books and materials for their classrooms, co-curricula, and/or extra-curricular activities. General criteria considered for selection of supplementary material will be the same as listed in #1 above. The teacher/advisor may seek input from the school librarian, other teachers, the principal, parents, and/or students. The decision to allocate funds for purchasing books will be based on staff recommendations and the approval of the building principal.
3. Any curricula, co-curricula, or extra-curricular material ordered without prior inspection will be previewed by the teacher/advisor before it is presented to students. If the educator questions suitability, the material will be referred to the librarian and principal for review.

PROCEDURE FOR LIBRARY MATERIALS:

1. School libraries exist to provide resources which will:
 - Enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served.
 - Stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation aesthetic values and ethical standards.
 - Help students develop the practice of critical reading and thinking.

Library collections will include materials representing different opinions on controversial issues in order to enable students to make intelligent judgments. Students will have access to a wide and varied collection. Library materials will not be excluded because of personal opinion, prejudice, or because of the race, sex, nationality, or social, political and/or religious views of the author(s). Finding controversial materials in a school library does not imply that the school/library supports the ideas contained in those materials.

2. Librarians are delegated the responsibility of selecting library materials. They may seek the assistance of teachers, administrators, specialists, parents and students along with the use of evaluation aids such as those approved by the Association of School Libraries and other catalogs or media reviews. The decision to purchase library materials will be based on the recommendation of the librarian with the approval of the principal.

3. Donated library materials will be subject to the same selection criteria as purchased materials. Librarians and/or principals will dispose of unsuitable donated materials in an approved manner.
4. The librarian will periodically evaluate library materials in order to maintain a BALANCED collection which is both historically accurate and appropriately current. The librarian will notify the building principal whenever he/she deems a material should be removed. Such materials will be disposed of in a manner approved by the Central Office administration.

PROCESS FOR OBJECTING AND/OR RECONSIDERING MATERIALS OR INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

RESPONSIBILITY:

Parents have final authority to approve materials and instructional activities used by their own children. Upon written parental request to the classroom teachers, librarian, and/or principal, a student will be excused from reading or viewing questioned materials. This authority of parents or guardians, however, extends only to their own children. Any citizen, group, or individual staff member wishing to have the School District reconsider the general use of any material or instructional activity will pursue the following defined course of action. While under consideration, the questioned material or activity will remain in circulation/use. This process also includes the ability of a staff member, parent, and/or other individual to ask for reconsideration of a material or instructional activity not currently in use or circulation.

PROCEDURE:

It is understood that each step in the following sequenced process will be completed as quickly as possible. Resolution to the objection may be achieved at the end of any step, or the objector may decide to proceed to the next step in the process.

- Step 1: The individual or group will discuss any concerns informally with the librarian or other educator(s) using the material or instructional activity. Subsequently, the educator(s) will share these concerns with other staff members and the building administrator who might be impacted by a decision on this book or material or instructional activity.
- Step 2: If an individual or group has further concerns, they will respond in writing or on audio tape to the "Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material or Instructional Activity" (Appendix A). The educator using the material will complete the form "Response to Questioned Material or Instructional Activity" (Appendix B). Copies of these forms will be exchanged and forwarded to the building principal who will meet with both parties. After this meeting, the principal will forward copies of the two forms and minutes of this meeting to the Central Office administrators. This step will be completed within five working days.

Step 3: If an individual or group has further concerns, the appropriate building level Material Evaluation Committee will meet to evaluate the questioned material or activity. Everyone involved in this process will be expected to read and examine the challenged material or consider the instructional activity according to the procedures established in this Selection Policy. Whenever available, critical reviews of the challenged material will also be read. The Committee is charged with forming an opinion based upon the material in its entirety. At this point in the process, School Board members and the public/community will be notified of the objection and the material or activity in question.

Members of each building level Material Evaluation Committee will include: the principal, librarian, two teachers, one student with parental permission (OPTIONAL), and one community member. If it is not deemed appropriate for a student to participate in any group process, a parent will be invited to substitute in the student position. Should the objection involve library materials, the librarian will be replaced on this committee by another staff member appointed by the principal. This Committee will meet with the individual objector or a representative of the group. A written decision from this Committee will be forwarded to the Central Office administration, the individual or group who submitted the request, and the teacher/librarian. This step will be completed within ten working days.

Step 4: If either the individual/group or the teacher/librarian is dissatisfied with the Committee's decision, an appeal may be made to the Central Office administration who will meet with the principal, a representative from the Material Evaluation Committee, and the parties involved.

After this meeting, a Central Office administrator will respond in writing to all parties, approving, modifying, or overruling the Committee's decision. This step will be completed within five working days. At this point in the process, copies of all written documentation regarding the complaint will be forwarded to the School Board and made available to the public/community at large.

Step 5: If any of the parties involved is dissatisfied with the administrator's decision, an appeal may be made within 10 school days to the Board of Education. In a warned meeting, the Board will schedule such an appeal within the next two regularly scheduled Board meetings following the request. A final decision regarding the questioned material will be made by the School Board, meeting in public session. The Board's decision regarding the status of any questioned material or activity will hold for a minimum of one calendar year.

APPENDIX A

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL OR INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

Request Initiated by:

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Citizen Represents:

_____ Self

_____ Organization: Name _____

_____ Other Group: Name _____

1. To what do you object? (Please be specific.)

2. What is educationally positive about this material or activity?

3. What do you feel might be the result(s) of using this material or activity?

4. Do you recommend this material or activity for use with any age group? If yes, please state age/grade levels.

(Continued...)

Materials and Instructional Activity Selection, and Review Policy

Appendix A

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5. How much of this material or activity have you read, viewed, used and/or heard?

6. What do you believe is the theme and/or purpose of this material or activity?

7. What would you like your school to do about this material or activity?

8. What is the benefit of having this material or activity in our school district?

Other Comments:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Check here if you wish your identity kept confidential at Step 4 in our process.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONED MATERIAL OR INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY

TITLE: _____

AUTHOR: _____

PUBLISHER/DATE: _____

NAME OF RESPONDER: _____

1. Where and how is this material/activity used?

2. What do you believe is the theme and/or purpose of this material/activity?

3. In general, why should this material/activity be included in the library, or studied in the curriculum by students at the grade/group level indicated?

4. Specifically, what is the unique value of this material/activity?

(Continued...)

Materials and Instructional Activity Selection, and Review Policy

Appendix B

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5. What do you feel might be the impact of removing this material/activity?

6. Have you read any critical or literary reviews of this material or activity? If yes, cite these reviewers and their opinions.

7. What do you feel should be done with this material or activity and why?

8. Can you recommend any material or activity in place of that which is questioned? Why or why not?

Other Comments:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

DATE ADOPTED: DRAFT

PURPOSE:

It is the policy of the Colchester School District (District) to provide students with a broad variety of instructional materials to support student learning and promote equitable access to learning for all students.

Instructional materials will include a range of evidence-based instructional practices that most effectively improve student learning, as required by national and Vermont guidance and locally collected and analyzed student data. Instructional materials and practices will provide opportunities for each student to successfully engage in the curriculum, meet the graduation requirements that are aligned with Vermont standards, and promote opportunities for personalization.

DEFINITIONS:

Instructional Materials are the materials and supplies for academic, social-emotional, and physical learning in classrooms.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Instructional materials are critical to equitable learning for all students. Instructional materials shall be made available to students, selected by professional staff in accordance with the following criteria and procedures.

The District shall use the state standards approved by the State Board of Education and the Colchester School District Equity Policy (CSD Equity Policy) as the basis for the development and selection of curriculum, methods of instruction, locally developed assessments, and the content and skills taught and learned in school.

The board will ensure the written and delivered curriculum that each school implements the District's written and delivered curriculum, which will be:

- A. Aligned with the standards approved by the State Board of Education;
- B. Coordinated across all grades to prepare students for graduation;
- C. Coordinated across the District;

- D. Informed by ongoing review of new research and evidence, changing learning opportunities, and updates to the standards approved by the State Board of Education;
- E. Designed to enable all students to achieve the graduation requirements;
- F. Integrated with technology across all disciplines; and
- G. Aligned with CSD Equity Policy and commitment to equitable learning for all students.

ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Each school shall enable students to engage annually in rigorous, relevant and comprehensive learning opportunities that allows them to demonstrate proficiency in:

- A. Literacy (including critical thinking, language, reading, speaking and listening, and writing);
- B. Mathematical content and practices (including numbers, operations, and the concepts of algebra and geometry by the end of grade 10);
- C. Scientific inquiry and content knowledge (including the concepts of life sciences, physical sciences, earth and space sciences and engineering design);
- D. Global citizenship (including the concepts of civics, economics, geography, world language, cultural studies and history);
- E. Physical education and health education as defined in 16 V.S.A. §131;
- F. Artistic expression (including visual, media and performing arts); and
- G. Transferable skills/Colchester School District Essential Expectations (including communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, inquiry, problem solving and the use of technology).

Further, each school with a pre-kindergarten early education program shall offer high-quality instructional materials for pre-kindergarten programs as outlined in State Board Rule 2600.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES:

The superintendent or designee will develop procedures addressing access to instructional materials to ensure that each school:

- A. Provides a learning environment with sufficient supplies and infrastructure to allow for learning;
- B. Develops, maintains, and expands as needed, instructional materials that include a collection of print, digital and technology resources;
- C. Ensures that the curriculum, aligned to state standards and CSD Equity Policy, is supported by necessary digital and print resources;
- D. Ensures that students, teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals have access to an organized collection of digital and print instructional materials sufficient and appropriate to support all students in meeting or exceeding the current state and national standards;

- E. Provides students access to the instructional materials on a regular basis, to use materials for reading, research, and for instruction in the skills needed to select and use information effectively;
- F. Provides access to a variety of up-to-date information, assistive, and other technology to support students in meeting or exceeding the standards;
- G. Provides broadband Internet service in school/on campus for students and educators to access educational resources;
- H. Adopts and implements written policies on electronic resources, acceptable internet usage, and procedures for handling complaints for both staff and students;
- I. Provides opportunities for library media specialist to collaborate with teachers as they integrate information research skills into their curriculum; and
- J. Ensures that students are afforded the opportunity to learn the skills to locate, evaluate, synthesize, and to present information and ideas within content areas using instructional materials;
- K. Incorporates principles of equity within instruction materials, ensuring alignment with CSD Equity Policy; and
- L. Ensure the implementation of developmentally appropriate curriculum which is aligned with Vermont's Early Learning Standards in any pre qualified public prekindergarten program.

The superintendent or designee will develop and implement procedures to:

- A. Address the selection of instructional materials within the context of the alignment with mandated state standards and equitable access to those materials;
- B. Develop procedures to address selection, deselection, donations, and reconsideration of instructional materials; and
- C. Respond to requests for reconsideration of instructional materials.

All concerns regarding the selection of instructional materials shall be directed to the superintendent for handling consistent with those procedures.

Legal Reference

16 V.S.A §261a(a)(1)

State Board of Education Rule Series 2000 (Education Quality Standards)

State Board of Education Rule Series 2600 (Prekindergarten Education)

Resources

Colchester School District Equity Policy (CI)

PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION, DESELECTION & RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Responsibilities

Colchester School District (District) has a responsibility to select, deaccess, and consider instructional materials for students to meet state standards, District proficiencies, and provide equitable learning for all students. While under consideration, the challenged material will remain in circulation/use.

Procedure for Selection of Instructional Materials:

- District administrators, curriculum teams, and building-based content teams are responsible for selecting instructional materials. They may seek the assistance of teachers, administrators, specialists, and students along with the use of evaluation/selection tools. The decision to purchase instructional materials will be based on the recommendation of the selection team with the approval of the principal and director of curriculum.
- Donated instructional library materials will be subject to the same selection and deaccession criteria as purchased materials. The district or school will work with individuals or organizations to choose items for memorials or bequests.
- The District will periodically evaluate instructional materials in order to maintain materials that promote equitable learning for all students, aligned with state standards and Colchester School District Equity Policy (CSD Equity Policy).

Procedure for Deselection of Instructional Materials:

Deselection is an ongoing process which includes the removal of materials out of alignment with state standards, CSD Equity Policy, or in need of replacement based on format or ware.

Updates are important in maintaining a useful and usable collection of instructional materials.

Criteria to consider for items:

- In poor physical condition;
- Containing obsolete subject matter;
- No longer aligned with instructional framework;
- No longer needed to support the curriculum or student/faculty interests;
- Superseded by more current information;
- Containing inaccurate information; and or
- In an obsolete format.

Deselected items may be discarded or offered to classroom teachers, building staff, students, and the community for use outside the District curriculum.

Procedure for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

Any school community member wishing to have the District reconsider the use of an instructional material may pursue the following procedure. While under consideration, the challenged material will remain in use.

Resolution to the reconsideration process may be achieved at any point in the process. The following steps will be followed in order:

1. The complainant will discuss any concerns with the instructor. The instructor will share these concerns with the building administration. It is preferred that complaints be resolved through this informal communication process. If a complaint initially comes through the administration, the administration will immediately involve the instructor in the discussion.
2. If the complainant has further concerns, they will fill out the "Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials" form within 10 school days of the meeting with the administrator. A separate form must be completed for each material for reconsideration.
3. If the Request for Reconsideration form is returned, the instructor will complete the "Response to Reconsideration of Material" form within 10 school days.
4. Copies of these forms will be exchanged and forwarded to the building administrator who will meet with both parties. After this meeting, the administrator will conduct a review of the challenged material. The building administrator is charged with forming an opinion based upon the material and its alignment with state standards, District curriculum, and the CSD Equity Policy. The administrator may consult with central office administrators, curriculum leaders/teams, leadership teams, and content specialist. This step will be completed within 30 school days.

The building administrator will be responsible for the following:

- a. Reading, viewing, or listening to the challenged material in its entirety;
 - b. Checking the alignment of the materials with state standards, District curriculum, and the CSD Equity Policy;
 - c. Formally reviewing the request for reconsideration form submitted by the complainant, determining if the concern interferes with state standards, District curriculum, and or the CSD Equity Policy; and
 - d. Providing a written response of the concern and decision based on state standards, District curriculum, and or the CSD Equity Policy.
5. If any of the parties involved is dissatisfied with the school administrator's decision, an appeal may be made within 5 school days to the superintendent or designee. A final decision regarding the reconsidered material will be made by the superintendent within 5 school days.

Appendix A: Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form

Directions:

- Read the Colchester School District Equity Policy (CSD Equity Policy) before completing this form
- Complete the Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form (Appendix A)
- Give the form to the instructor

Request Initiated by (Name/s):

Address:

Phone:

I am a (check all that apply):

- Parent/Caregiver of a current Colchester student
- Teacher or staff member
- Current student attending a District school
- Colchester community member
- Representative of a group or organization (name)
- Other _____

Name of material to which you object? Please list the specific title, author, edition, format, etc.

Did you read/view this material in its entirety? If not, which part(s) did you read/view?

Describe the concern regarding this material? (Be specific, noting specific page numbers or sections)

What brought this material to your attention?

What do you believe is the instructional purpose of this material?

In what way does this material conflict with state standards, District curriculum, or the [CSD Equity Policy](#)?

Does the instructional material offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and problems of various marginalized groups?

Yes

No

What would you like the school to do about this instructional material?

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY: LIBRARY MATERIALS

DATE ADOPTED: DRAFT

PURPOSE

It is the policy of the Colchester School District (District) to provide students with a broad variety of library materials that promote student learning and areas of individual interests, provide equitable access to learning for all students, and build a lifelong enjoyment of reading.

Library materials will include materials that provide access to a diverse library collection that supports students in the curriculum, their personal research and recreational reading, and that sustains students' First Amendment Rights to access information and to read freely. Library materials provided by the district, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all students.

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. The school library plays an important role in helping students gain skills, understandings and knowledge, and enjoyment of reading. Therefore, library materials provided by the District, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all students. This policy exists to ensure that the District provides access to a diverse library collection that supports students in the curriculum, their personal research, and recreational reading, and that sustains students' First Amendment Rights to access information and to read freely.

DEFINITIONS

Library Materials include all materials considered part of the library collection, including but not limited to print, digital, and media production resources. Library materials may be found in both physical and virtual library spaces, as well as classroom libraries.

Diverse Library Collection are the library materials and resources that intentionally contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences, including those from traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities.

ACCESS TO LIBRARY MATERIALS

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. The school library plays an important role in helping students to inquire, study and evaluate information, and to gain new understandings and knowledge.

Each school shall:

- A. Provide a learning environment with sufficient supplies and infrastructure to allow for learning;
- B. Develop, maintain, and expand as needed a library collection of print, digital and technology resources, administered by a certified library media specialist;
- C. Ensure that the curriculum is supported by necessary digital and print resources;
- D. Ensure that students, educators, administrators, and staff have access to an organized collection of digital and print materials sufficient and appropriate to support all students in meeting or exceeding the current state and national standards at no cost to the student;
- E. Provide students access to the library on a regular basis to use materials for reading, research, and for instruction in the skills needed to select and use information effectively;
- F. Provide access to a variety of up-to-date information, assistive, and other technology to support students in meeting or exceeding the standards;
- G. Provide broadband internet service in school/on campus for students and educators to access educational resources;
- H. Adopt and implement written policies on electronic resources, acceptable internet usage, and procedures for handling complaints for both staff and students;
- I. Support a schedule that provides opportunities for a library media specialist to collaborate with educators as they integrate information research skills into their curriculum;
- J. Ensure that students are afforded the opportunity to learn the skills to locate, evaluate, synthesize, and to present information and ideas within content areas using technology integration;
- K. Provide access to diverse library collections that promote equitable learning for all students and are in alignment with the District's Equity Policy; and
- L. Promote personal growth, interests and an enjoyment of reading.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The superintendent or designee will develop and implement procedures that address the selection of library materials and the provision of access to those materials. The superintendent or designee will develop procedures to address:

- A. Selection of library materials;
- B. Deselection of library materials;
- C. Donation of library materials; and
- D. Reconsideration of library materials.

All concerns regarding the selection of instructional materials shall be directed to the superintendent for handling consistent with those procedures.

USE OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

The library media specialist may consult with faculty, the student body, community members and organizations to develop library collections that are diverse, inclusive, and representative of the history, contributions, and perspectives of ethnic groups and social groups.

At the discretion of the building principal, students, staff, and family/caregiver members of the District may be allowed use of library materials and resources. However, such access shall not interfere with regular school use of those materials and resources.

Legal Reference

16 V.S.A §563 (14)

State Board of Education Rule Series 2122.2 (Access to Instructional Materials)

Resources

CSD Equity Policy (C1)

[*Library Bill of Rights*](#), American Library Association

[*Freedom to Read Statement*](#), American Library Association

PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION, DESELECTION & RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Responsibilities

Colchester School District (District) has a responsibility to select, deselect, and consider library materials for students to provide access to library materials that help students meet state standards and District proficiencies, have options for students to inquire, study, evaluate, gain new understandings and knowledge, uphold the principles of intellectual freedom, provide equitable learning for all students, and build a lifelong enjoyment of reading.

Resources:

The principles of intellectual freedom are inherent in the First Amendment and are expressed in the [Library Bill of Rights](#), adopted by the American Library Association (ALA, Appendix B), as well as the ALA's [Freedom to Read Statement](#) (Appendix C). In accordance with these documents and the [Colchester School District's Equity Policy](#) (CSD Equity Policy, C1), our district libraries necessarily contain materials with multiple viewpoints that promote diversity and critical thinking skills.

Procedure for Selection of Library Materials:

1. Accredited librarians are responsible for selecting library materials. They may seek the assistance of teachers, administrators, specialists, and students along with the use of evaluation aids such as those approved by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and other catalogs or media reviews. The decision to purchase library materials will be based on the recommendation of the librarian with the approval of the principal.
2. Donated library materials will be subject to the same selection and deaccession criteria as purchased materials. The librarian will work with individuals or organizations to choose items for memorials or bequests.
3. The librarian will periodically evaluate library materials in order to maintain a balanced collection which is accurate, current, and aligned with the Library Bill of Rights and our CSD Equity Policy.

Procedure for Deselection of Library Materials:

Deselection is an ongoing collection development process which shall include the removal of materials no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost and worn materials still of educational value. Deselecting is important in maintaining a useful and usable collection. Professional guidelines for deselecting should be followed. Consideration should include condition, currency of subject matter, curriculum, student/faculty interests, circulation data, accuracy, and format.

Deselected items may be discarded or offered to classroom teachers, building staff, students, and the community.

Procedure for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Any Colchester community member wishing to have the District reconsider the general use of any library material may pursue the following procedure. While under consideration, the challenged material will remain in circulation/use.

Concerns and complaints should be resolved at the lowest level possible within the structure of the District and all parties should aim to resolve issues in a timely, respectful, and appropriate manner.

Resolution to the reconsideration process may be achieved at any point in the process. The reconsideration process must take place during the school year, between September and April, in order for the process to be completed prior to summer. The following steps will be followed in order:

1. The complainant will discuss concerns with the school librarian or building administrator. Both the librarian and building administrator will be notified of the concern.
2. If the complainant has further concerns, they will fill out the "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form (Appendix A) within 10 school days of the meeting with the librarian or building administrator. A separate form must be completed for each material for reconsideration. A complainant may not challenge any more than 3 books per school year.
3. If the Request for Reconsideration form is returned, the librarian will complete the "Response to Reconsideration of Material" form (Appendix D) within 15 school days.
4. Copies of these forms will be exchanged and forwarded to the building principal who will meet with both parties. After this meeting, the principal will forward copies of the two forms and minutes of this meeting to the central office administrators. This step will be completed within 5 school days.
5. If the complainant has further concerns, a building level Material Reconsideration Committee will be formed to evaluate the challenged material. Everyone involved in this process will be expected to read and examine the challenged material according to the procedures established in this procedure. When available, critical reviews of the challenged material will also be read. The committee is charged with forming an opinion based upon the material in its entirety. Each committee member will also fill out the Response to Reconsidered Material form (Appendix D). Members of the Material Evaluation Committee will include, at a minimum: the principal, librarian, and at least one other educator. If possible, a student and/or community member will be included as well. This step will be completed within 30 school days.

The Committee will be responsible for the following:

- a. Reading, viewing, or listening to the challenged material in its entirety. This will entail obtaining enough copies for the committee to use.
 - b. Checking the general acceptance of the material by consulting recommended lists and reviews.
 - c. Determining to what extent the material supports curriculum and/or the goals of the Library Materials Policy, CSD Equity Policy, or other District goals.
 - d. Formally reviewing and addressing each item on the request for reconsideration form submitted by the complainant.
 - e. Presenting the minutes of the meeting and a written recommendation to the central office administration and the complainant.
6. If any of the parties involved are dissatisfied with the committee's decision, an appeal may be made to the central office administration who will meet with the principal, a representative from the Material Reconsideration Committee, and the parties involved. After this meeting, a central office administrator will respond in writing to all parties, approving, modifying, or overruling the committee's decision. This step will be completed within five working days. At this point in the process, copies of all written documentation regarding the complaint will be forwarded to the school board and made available to the public/community at large.
7. If any of the parties involved is dissatisfied with the school administrator's decision, an appeal may be made within 5 school days to the superintendent. A final decision regarding the reconsidered material will be made by the superintendent within 5 school days. The superintendent's decision regarding the status of any reconsidered material will hold for a minimum of 3 calendar years.

Appendix A: Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form

Directions:

- Read the Colchester School District Library Materials Policy (CSD Library Materials Policy)
- Read the Colchester School District Equity Policy (CSD Equity Policy)
- Read the American Library Association (ALA) [Library Bill of Rights](#) and [Freedom to Read Statement](#)
- Complete the Reconsideration of Instructional Materials Form
- Give the form to the school librarian or school administrator

Request Initiated by:

Address:

Phone:

Affiliation with Colchester School District:

Have you read the following:

- CSD Library Materials Selection Policy
- ALA Library Bill of Rights (Appendix B)
- ALA Freedom to Read Statement (Appendix C)
- CSD Equity Policy

Name of material to which you object? Please list the specific title, author, edition, etc.

Format of material

- Print book
- Audiobook or eBook
- Movie or video
- Other _____

Did you read/view this material in its entirety? If not, which part(s) did you read/view?

Why do you object to this material? (Be specific, noting specific page numbers or sections):

What brought this material to your attention?

What is educationally positive about this material?

What do you believe is the theme and/or purpose of this material?

For what ages do you think this material is appropriate?

What would you like the school to do about this material?

What professional, non-partisan reviews exist for this material? In which publications did you find these reviews?

In its place, what material of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject matter?

How do your concerns with this material align or conflict with the [CSD Equity Policy](#)?

Will the reading and/or viewing and/or listening to material result in a more compassionate understanding of human beings?

- Yes
- No

Does it offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and problems of various marginalized groups?

- Yes
- No

Appendix B: American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights

(Included with permission from the American Library Association)

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- A. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- B. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- C. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- D. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- E. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- F. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- G. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights.

Appendix C: American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement

(Included with permission from the American Library Association)

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture

depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated. Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the

application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses
The Children's Book Council
Freedom to Read Foundation
National Association of College Stores
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Council of Teachers of English
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

Appendix D: Response to Reconsidered Library Material Form

Name of Reviewer/Committee Member:

Title of Reconsidered Resource (Material or Activity):

Author:

Publisher/Date:

Name of Complainant:

Overview of Complaint:

For which audience is this material intended (age level/span)?

How does this material align with state standards, district proficiencies and or CSD Equity Policy?

Where and how is this resource currently being used?

What is the unique value of this resource?

What might be the impact of removing this resource?

What professional or literary reviews or awards exist for this resource? Cite review and opinions (attach if needed)

Are there other resources of equal literary quality that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject matter?

Recommendation Action for Resolution:

Name and Date:

References:

American Library Association. (2004, June 30). *The Freedom to Read Statement*.
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>

American Library Association. (2019, January 29). *Library Bill of Rights*.
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

Colchester School District. (2023, September 5). *Equity Policy*.
<https://www.csdvt.org/district/schoolboard/policies/c/c1.pdf>

Milton Town School District. (2022, December 15). *Milton Town School District Policy D22: Selection of Library Materials*. <https://4.files.edl.io/1d60/12/16/22/151249-438b0193-deeb-4742-96ba-53b16566d305.pdf>

Milton Town School District. (2023, June). *Milton Town School District Administrative Rules and Procedures: Procedures for D22 Selection of Library Materials Policy*.
<https://4.files.edl.io/1ba1/07/14/23/174123-9c51e4dc-ac1c-49b9-945c-4e85734c9ab4.pdf>

South Burlington School District. (2008, January 29). *South Burlington School District Procedures 18: Selection of Library Materials Administrative Procedures*.
<https://www.sbschools.net/cms/lib/VT01819219/Centricity/Domain/34/I8%20Procedures.pdf>

White River Valley Supervisory Union. (2022, November 17). *Policy D32: WRVSU Reconsideration of Library Material Procedure*.
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1133xZZebNICu5q3Aps_4lep4whqv67k96G2Oar9sJ8U/edit

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Meeting
Colchester High School Media Center

Tuesday, February 6, 2024
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES (General Session)

The Colchester Board of Education held a regular board meeting on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, in the Colchester High School Media Center. Board members in attendance were Board Chair Lindsey Cox, Directors Nic Longo, Ben Yousey-Hindes, Felix Anderson, Laurie Kigonya, and Student Representative Phoebe Richardson. District administrators and employees in attendance included Superintendent Amy Minor, Business and Operations Manager George Trieb, Director of Curriculum Gwen Carmolli, and Director of Student Support Services Carrie Lutz. There were no audience members.

I. Call to Order

Board Chair Lindsey Cox called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Citizen Participation

None.

III. Second and Final Reading of the Animals in the Classroom or on School Property Policy: F29 Action

As explained during the first reading of this policy, the Vermont School Board Association does not require or recommend school districts have a policy on this topic, nor do they have it on their list to consider. District administrators recommended transitioning this policy to a set of procedures.

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to approve the removal of the Animals in the Classroom or on School Property Policy: F29 from the CSD policy manual. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Second and Final Reading of Harassment of Employees Policy: D12 Action

The opening paragraph was updated to align directly with the Vermont School Board Association's model policy. No other changes were made.

Director Longo moved to approve the second and final reading of Harassment of Employees Policy: D12. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Quarterly Financial Update Information

Business and Operations Manager George Trieb provided an overview of the year-to-date financial report for the period ending December 2023. He summarized that revenue and expenditures are tracking mostly as expected and noted that if the current spending trend continues, the district could expect a surplus of \$634,941. The board asked some clarifying questions about specific line items.

VI. FY'25 Budget Discussion

Information

The board warned the FY'25 budget at the last meeting. Since then, the legislature has signaled that they may be making changes to the law that would impact the tax rate. Superintendent Minor provided an overview of the warned budget and the educational tax components that create the estimated tax rate. She highlighted how the district compares with other regional districts in per-pupil spending, showing that Colchester is consistently one of the lowest-spending districts. She further noted that Colchester taxpayers have averaged an annual tax rate increase of 1.53% over the past decade. She went over the communication plan that is in motion to inform residents about the district's current successes, areas they are working to improve, and how the FY'25 budget will impact taxpayers.

Superintendent Minor provided a legislative update, noting that there have been a lot of meetings between legislators, committees, and associations to share information regarding Act 127, the state's new education funding formula. Legislators have stated there have been unintended consequences from Act 127. They have committed to making amendments to the law that will affect budgets already warned but not yet approved by voters. Ultimately, the House Committee on Ways and Means is considering removing the universal 5% pre-CLA tax cap included initially in Act 127 and instead giving districts an individual-based cent discount. The Committee is also considering removing the 10% per pupil spending cap and subsequently the need for a tax review committee. Nothing is final yet, and Superintendent Minor noted that information continues to evolve, making it challenging to inform the community what they are voting on. To meet the print and mailing deadline for the Annual Report to the Community, the report includes the estimated tax increase as the law is currently written and a disclaimer to let taxpayers know that changes may come. She stated it felt essential to provide a barometer to the community and a link to find up-to-date information in case legislatures pass law changes.

The board discussed how to best inform the community of Colchester's situation and how it differs from some of the narratives being told statewide. They noted how little control the school board and district have over the estimated tax rate this year. The overwhelming majority of the estimated tax increase can be attributed to Colchester's Common Level of Appraisal, which makes up for out-of-date property value appraisals and is not something the district can alter.

The board asked administrators how much would have to be cut from the budget to lower the estimated tax rate. Superintendent Minor stated it would have to be a profound reduction in staffing that would significantly impact students. For example, to get the estimated tax rate from 15% to about 9%, they would look at eliminating 67 teachers - a quarter of the teaching staff and equivalent to seven million dollars. The district is currently right at the recommended class size set through the AOE's Education Quality Standards. Reducing the teaching staff by that much would substantially increase class sizes and not only put the district out of compliance with the AOE but also lower the quality of education provided to children in Colchester. Director Yousey-Hindes noted that Colchester has because Colchester has historically operated already trimmed and been very fiscally conservative, it makes this year challenging because the district does not have extra staff to reduce or extra room to play with in the budget.

VII. Approval of Consent Agenda

Action

The board reviewed the following consent agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Board Meeting Date: February 6, 2024

Revised

Licensed Employees (Teacher/Administrator)

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Teacher	Nicole	Hamblet	Resignation	Elementary Teacher	1.0	MBS	Request to End Employment -End of School Year 23/24			

Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Board Approval Required

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support

Non-Licensed Employees (Support Staff), Informational

Contract Type	First Name	Last Name	Category	Position	FTE/Hours	Building	Agenda Information	Person Replacing	Budgeted	Admin Support
Support Staff	Tyler	Willard	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	CHS	Notice of Hire	Open Position		
Support Staff	Linda	Neitzer	New Hire	Food Service	7.0	CHS	Notice of Hire	Andre Jordao		
Support Staff	Andre	Jordao	Termination	Food Service	8.0	CHS	Notice of Termination			
support Staff	Julie	Brigante	New Hire	Food Service	30.0	CHS	Notice of Hire	Open Position		
support Staff	Sidney	Martinez	New Hire	Paraeducator	32.5	CHS	Notice of Hire	Open Position		
support Staff	Melissa	Bushell	Termination	Paraeducator	32.5	PPS	Notice of Termination			
support Staff	Melissa	Payne-Vilmor	New Hire	Administrative Assistant II	40.0	CHS	Notice of Hire	Gabriel Brooks		

Director Kigonya moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Approval of Meeting Minutes Action
• January 16, 2024 (general)

Director Anderson moved to approve the minutes from the meeting held on January 16, 2024.

IX. Board/Administration Communication, Correspondence, Committee Reports Information

- The district is working to get budget information out to community members. The Annual Report is at the printers and should be mailed to residents next week. The Your Vote Matters video series is being filmed and will be posted over the coming weeks.
- Carmel Quinn was selected as the Vermont Educational Support Staff Professional of the Year, and she has been moved forward as one of the five national finalists.
- At the end of January, the district worked with CESO to engage students, employees, families, and community members in discussing long-term facility needs. It was a successful week, and the district expects to receive a formal report from CESO soon.

X. Future Agenda Items Information

- FY'25 Budget Discussion
- Continuation of the Policy Review Cycle
- NEASC Report from CHS
- NELMS Report from CMS
- 2024-25 School Calendar

XI. Adjournment

Director Yousey-Hindes moved to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Recorder:

Board Clerk:

Meghan Baule
Recording Secretary

Ben Yousey-Hindes
Board Clerk