

Date of issue	February 2024
Original date of issue	June 1995
Subject	SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF LEARNING MEDIA AND ADDRESSING CONCERNS
References	Policy 3130 – Equity and Inclusive Education Policy 4140 – Selection and Approval of Learning Media APM A1063 – Use of Copyright-protected Work for Education APM A1350 – Information and Computing Technology and Internet Appropriate Use Guidelines for Employees Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools, Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (2014) Human Rights Code The Trillium List Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action
Contact	Student Services

1. Purpose

All learning media used in the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) should be aligned with the Ontario curriculum or the Kindergarten program. Consistent with *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools, Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation (2014)* and the SCDSB Strategic Priorities, selection of learning media should take into consideration a wide range of interests, ages, abilities, and social and emotional maturity levels of students, as well as reflect the diversity of learners, communities, and society. As such, schools are expected to regularly review learning materials to ensure they are reflective of a diverse population. This includes consideration of representation, access, ability, interest, student voice, and other factors that influence how students engage in learning materials based on their identity and lived experience. Learning material that is considered to be biased, inaccurate, or otherwise harmful shall be removed.

2. Definition of learning media

Learning media includes all learning materials and resources used by educators and students. This includes forms of traditional print media and non-print media, including a variety of audio-visual and digital materials.

3. Selecting learning media

3.1 All learning media used must enhance student achievement and well-being. Commercially developed and supported learning media may be used, provided they meet the criteria outlined in this administrative procedures memorandum (APM) and Policy 4140 – Selection and Approval of Learning Media. Commercially developed learning media should not be used as the sole program, but in combination with a wide variety of evidence-based materials/resources.

- 3.2 The principal, in consultation with the educators of a school, shall select and review learning media for student use, as follows:
 - 3.2.1 in accordance with Policy 4140 – Selection and Approval of Learning Media;
 - 3.2.2 using the criteria outlined in this APM;
 - 3.2.3 ensuring that learning media is evidence-based to enhance student achievement and well-being;
 - 3.2.4 in accordance with APM A1350 – Information and Computing Technology and Internet Appropriate Use Guidelines for Employees; and,
 - 3.2.5 in accordance with APM A1063 – Use of Copyright-protected Work for Education.

- 3.3 Centrally-assigned staff may provide support or expertise in selecting and reviewing learning media for student and educator use, as follows:
 - 3.3.1 in accordance with Policy 4140;
 - 3.3.2 using the criteria outlined in this APM;
 - 3.3.3 ensuring that learning media is evidence-based to enhance student achievement and well-being;
 - 3.3.4 in accordance with APM A1350 – Information and Computing Technology and Internet Appropriate Use Guidelines for Employees; and,
 - 3.3.5 in accordance with APM A1063 – Use of Copyright-protected Work for Education.

4. Expectations

- 4.1 Learning media shall:
 - 4.1.1 assist students to develop responsible and independent decision-making skills;
 - 4.1.2 reflect the stated aims and objectives of the curriculum;
 - 4.1.3 be appropriate to the age, ability, and social and emotional maturity of the students;
 - 4.1.4 honour and value the contributions of Indigenous peoples by engaging with learning media that provides authentic voice, and enhancing knowledge and awareness about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives for all students;
 - 4.1.5 reflect and respond to the needs of diverse learners;
 - 4.1.6 reflect diverse identities of society and the many contributions made by all;
 - 4.1.7 stimulate the ability to evaluate critically both the form and the content of materials;
 - 4.1.8 motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behaviour and develop a sense of their duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges as participating citizens in society;
 - 4.1.9 be selected on the basis of reason and principle rather than personal opinion and bias; and,
 - 4.1.10 include quality books and other learning media by Canadians who represent the creative and artistic talent of the nation, including those created by Indigenous persons that directly address the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, specifically 62 and 63.

5. Human rights considerations

- 5.1 The overall selection of a school's learning media will take into account the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, (1990) and appropriate board policies, which recognize equal rights and opportunities without discrimination on the grounds of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, age, family status, and marital status. The development within students of such recognition is enabled by the selection of learning media (with community assistance where appropriate) after carefully considering the following questions:
- 5.1.1 Who is represented and does the learning media include non-dominant and/or marginalized identities such as racialized or Indigenous people, women in non-traditional roles, 2SLGBTQI+ people, people of diverse faiths, people with disabilities, etc.?
 - 5.1.2 How are they represented? Are these identities presented in a positive way that empowers their voice and agency, and acknowledges the complexity within a social identity group?
 - 5.1.3 Who is not represented? Are there specific voices missing in the learning media?
 - 5.1.4 Is the learning media representative of the diversity of the school and community?
 - 5.1.5 Does the learning media present a present day, accurate and complete representation, and global perspective?

6. Special considerations for selecting non-fiction learning media

- 6.1 The following questions shall be considered when selecting non-fiction learning media for use in a classroom or library resource centre:
- 6.1.1 Is the metric system used appropriately?
 - 6.1.2 Are safety considerations addressed?
 - 6.1.3 Do the learning media and methodologies provide for the use of technology (e.g., computers, tablets, and mobile devices, etc.) to enhance the learning process?
 - 6.1.4 Are a variety of pathways and careers representing Canada's diversified work force identified, described, and illustrated?
 - 6.1.5 Are all strands considered as essential in the learning media and methodologies?
 - 6.1.6 Do the learning media and methodologies provide opportunities for students to learn and express knowledge in a variety of ways?
 - 6.1.7 Do the learning media and methodologies provide students opportunities to develop the skills and reinforce the processes of critical thinking and problem solving?
 - 6.1.8 Are activities provided to develop students' skills in critical questioning and to foster the development and use of a variety of research skills?
 - 6.1.9 Are there opportunities for use of a variety of resources, including print, non-print, human, and community-based?
 - 6.1.10 Are students' special education learning needs addressed?
 - 6.1.11 Do the media and methodologies present learning opportunities which are appropriate to students' level of developmental age and unique learning needs?

- 6.1.12 Do the media and methodologies provide opportunities for students to consider the implications of various points of view in light of Canadian societal values, as outlined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the board's Strategic Priorities?
- 6.1.13 Does the learning media include current language, terminology, and perspective of historical events?
- 6.1.14 Does the learning media reflect the lived experiences of students and the community?

7. Considerations for selecting fiction learning media

- 7.1 The following questions shall be considered when selecting fiction learning media for use in a classroom or library resource centre:
 - 7.1.1 Does the learning media selected have meaningful themes from a variety of perspectives, which give a real purpose to viewing, reading, and thinking?
 - 7.1.2 Does the learning media provide an opportunity for growth in vocabulary, which will assist in thinking and language skills?
 - 7.1.3 Does the learning media chosen increase literary knowledge so that skill is developed in understanding and appreciating different and more complex ways of expressing knowledge?
 - 7.1.4 Does the learning media chosen have patterns or themes which will recur in more advanced media at a later time in life?
 - 7.1.5 Does the learning media illustrate a variety of values for discussion purposes?
 - 7.1.6 Does the learning media promote affirmative identities of a diverse student population?

8. Informal concerns about specific learning media

- 8.1 Because of the diversity of values and expectations in a school community, any student, parent/guardian, or member of the community may request that learning media used in the educational program be reviewed on the basis of appropriateness.
- 8.2 A school or department receiving such a request shall try to resolve the issue informally.
- 8.3 The specific learning media item(s) of concern may remain in use throughout the process, at the discretion of the school principal.
- 8.4 Requests should be treated objectively. The principal and/or other appropriate staff shall:
 - 8.4.1 review the learning media item(s) of concern to ensure consistency with the expectations outlined in this APM;
 - 8.4.2 if the learning media is deemed to be appropriate, explain the particular place the learning media of concern occupies in the education program (educational value, etc.);
 - 8.4.3 if the learning media is deemed to be inappropriate and/or inconsistent with the expectations outlined in the APM, remove from use; and,
 - 8.4.4 communicate the decision of the review to the individual(s) expressing concern, as well as a rationale for the decision.

- 8.5 If an informal resolution is not achievable, or the concern is not satisfied at the school level, a copy of the Formal Request for System Review of Learning Media form (FORM A8040 - 1) shall be provided to the individual(s) expressing concern.
- 8.6 The school principal will forward the completed form (FORM A8040 - 1) to the Superintendent of Student Achievement for review.

9. Formal concerns about specific learning media

- 9.1 When a Formal Request for System Review of Learning Media form (FORM A8040-1) is received by the Superintendent of Student Achievement:
 - 9.1.1 the Superintendent of Student Achievement shall initiate a formal review of the learning media of concern, including establishing a committee to review the learning media of concern;
 - 9.1.2 reasonable efforts should be made to ensure a member(s) of the committee has relevant and/or lived experience;
 - 9.1.3 the review committee should include input from the individual(s) expressing concern and offer the individual(s) an opportunity to participate in the review process;
 - 9.1.4 the learning media in question shall be provided to all participants of the committee, including the individual(s) expressing concern, if required;
 - 9.1.5 the participants shall communicate their reactions to the learning media;
 - 9.1.6 alternative methods or levels, if any, for use of the learning media may be identified;
 - 9.1.7 the Superintendent of Student Achievement shall prepare a report with recommendations for Administrative Council;
 - 9.1.8 Administrative Council shall decide on the appropriate course of action;
 - 9.1.9 the Superintendent of Student Achievement shall convey the decision, and the rationale, to the individual(s) expressing concern; and,
 - 9.1.10 the school affected, and all other schools, shall be informed by the Superintendent of Student Achievement of the process involved in the decision so that appropriate steps can be taken, if required.
- 9.2 The learning media of concern may remain in use during the review process, at the discretion of the Superintendent of Student Achievement.
- 9.3 The major criterion for the final decision is the appropriateness of the learning media for its intended educational use and consistency with the expectations outlined in this APM.

First issued June 1995

Revised June 2016, May 2021, February 2024

Issued under the authority of the Director of Education

FORMAL REQUEST FOR SYSTEM REVIEW OF LEARNING MEDIA

Date submitted _____	Date received _____
Initiated by _____	
Telephone _____	Email _____
Address _____	
Name of school _____	
REPRESENTING	
Self/group (give name) _____	
Organization (give name) _____	
LEARNING MEDIA OF CONCERN	
Type _____	
Title _____	
Author _____	
Publisher/producer _____	Publishing date _____

Please respond to the following questions. If additional space is required, attach a separate document.

1. Did you read, view, listen to the entire item? Yes No
If not, what sections did you review?

2. What concerns do you have about this media? Please be specific.

3. What, in your opinion, is the main idea conveyed through this media?

4. What, in your opinion, may be the results of a student's exposure to this media?

5. What do you see as the merits of this media?

6. What judgements of this media by professional critics are appropriate to this discussion?

7. In your opinion, for what age group would this media be appropriate?

8. Please recommend alternative media that you consider to be more appropriate.

Signature

Please return this form electronically to the school principal.

The school principal will forward to the Superintendent of Student Achievement to initiate a formal review.