

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Selection of Instructional and Library Resources</b>
<b>Effective:</b>	<b>September 2017</b>
<b>Cross-Reference:</b>	<b>The Ontario Curriculum; Equity and Inclusive Education Policy; Copyright--Fair Dealing Policy; Copyright--Fair Dealing Administrative Procedure; Professional Misconduct Regulation (O. Reg. 437/97) under the Ontario College of Teachers Act; Ontario Human Rights Code; Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Program Requirements</b>
<b>Revision Date:</b>	<b>March 2021</b>
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<b>Responsibility:</b>	<b>Superintendent of Education, School Programs</b>

### **INTENDED PURPOSE**

The Halton District School Board, along with the Ontario Ministry of Education, believes the purpose of public education is to achieve excellence, ensure equity and promote well-being for all students, while enhancing public confidence. Learning resources must be aligned with these goals and with the rights of a child as provided in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United National Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, echoed in the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, prescribed in the Ontario Education Act and protected and enforced through the Ontario Human Rights Code. The educator's ethical standard of respect, identified by the Ontario College of Teachers and the College of Early Childhood Educators, requires that members of these professions honour human dignity, emotional wellness, and cognitive development.

Both instructional resources selected by educators and library resources selected by library staff play an important role in supporting student achievement, engagement, citizenship, and upholding Indigenous rights and human rights. Resources include, but are not limited to print, multimedia, and digital content.

### **PURCHASING, SELECTING, AND UTILIZING RESOURCES**

There are no mandated learning resources in the Ontario curriculum. Therefore, staff must critically reflect on the selection of all learning materials both in our libraries and in our classrooms.

In alignment with the Board's Multi-Year Plan and Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement, both HDSB centralized departments that recommend and/or purchase resources for use in specified subject areas, and school-based staff that purchase instructional and library resources must ensure that they critically reflect on and select classroom and library resources appropriate for the subject area, age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected. Moreover, the collection of resources will recognize and reflect the broad range of Indigeneity, social identity, and diversity that may or may not be reflected in the school community but are reflected in global society.

"A positive, inclusive, equitable, and non-discriminatory elementary and secondary school experience is vitally important to a student's personal, social, and academic development, to their future economic security, and to a realization of their full potential." (Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusive Education, Ministry of Education, 2020).

To ensure that school experiences are "positive, inclusive, equitable, and non-discriminatory," educators will utilize instructional practices and resources that are differentiated, culturally relevant, and responsive, as well as aligned to curriculum content and current pedagogy. Resources used in classrooms and libraries play an important role in creating the conditions necessary for students to achieve their potential, be engaged in their learning, and develop positive attitudes towards learning. When educators, library, and board staff initially select and subsequently re-evaluate resources based on these ideas, they ensure that student strengths, needs, cultures, and diverse lived experiences are supported and reflected. The following guidelines are provided for educators to use as they select resources (print, multimedia, digital content) for the library as well as the classroom.

**Selection Guidelines for Administrators, Library Staff and Educators****i. Copyright**

Administrators, library staff and educators will ensure the use of resources is in compliance with the HDSB Copyright - Fair Dealing Policy and Administrative Procedure.

**ii. Presentation & Format**

All resources should be:

- Evaluated in terms of presentation, language use, readability, ease of use, graphics/illustrations, and relationship to existing resources;
- In formats that are sufficiently durable, and suitable for frequent use by their intended audience; and,
- Available in alternate formats to meet the requirements of students with special needs and comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

**iii. Instructional Value, Scope, and Content**

Resources selected as part of a grade, program, course, and/or to meet the specific needs and strengths of students as reflected in a learner profile should:

- reflect high and appropriate expectations for all students;
- lend themselves to contemporary pedagogy;
- purposely align with curriculum, the instructional context for which they are being used, and support learning goals;
- allow for a range of instructional strategies to be used to meet the needs of a broad range of learners;
- be written in a level of language that is appropriate for the student's age, reading level of the grade, program, or course;
- reflect and affirm the positive representation of communities, lived experiences, and interests of students; avoiding discriminatory stereotypes;
- be examined critically to identify whose voice(s) and/or identities are missing;
- acknowledge and serve to further augment the diversity within any social identity thereby avoiding the perpetuation of a single story;
- avoid misappropriation of material, and, where possible, deliberately select Canadian publishers emphasizing Canadian content from diverse sources;
- ensure that no aspect of a person's identity is ever the topic of a debate even in the context of using a resource to teach about bias to meet specific curriculum expectations (e.g., identifying point of view, recognizing propaganda and its purpose in a given context, or to balance an argument); and,
- align with the rights of a child as stated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code, and reflected in the Ontario Education Act.

**Process of Cyclical and Intentional Replacement of Resources**

Educators and library staff will regularly review existing resources used in all schools, classrooms, and libraries across the district and update/replace them to ensure that students and staff have access to current, engaging, and relevant collection of materials. As such:

- "Classics" must be evaluated and reconsidered/replaced to avoid upholding and reinforcing colonialism, a system that is inherently racist, classist, heteronormative, and/or sexist thereby ensuring the body of selected resources serve to dismantle racism and discrimination of any form rather than support it;
- Inclusive Design informs our choice of classroom and school resources;
- Publication dates which identify the context of the information presented are used as a measure of relevance in relation to the current realities of the school community and the world;
- Resources with low to limited library circulation, and outdated concepts are replaced with more engaging and updated materials; and,
- School library staff adhere to an established curation schedule whereby all collections are reviewed every two years.

To enhance the resource selection work of school-based library staff, and to promote specific district-wide initiatives, selection committees are regularly established to seek out and evaluate currently published print and digital media resources. Selection committee members include educators and library staff representing different panels and perspectives from schools and Board departments. Resources chosen by selection committees are shared with schools and recommended for purchase for school library collections through bulk orders organized by Library Services.

### **Discriminatory and Harmful Language**

The HDSB is committed to honouring the best interests of each child. This procedure aims to re-centre the lived experiences, culture, and social identities of learners who have been harmed by the use of resources that perpetuate negative stereotypes and promote deficit thinking. The Board aims to prioritize the purchasing, selecting, and utilizing of resources that affirm all students, particularly students who identify as Indigenous, Black, Racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, and others that continue to be sparsely represented in our current collections in libraries and classrooms.

It is important that staff employ critical consciousness when selecting learning materials, especially texts, images and digital media. Staff must reflect from an anti-oppression, anti-colonial perspective and question how our positionality may influence our perception of the resource.

The uttering, writing or use of racial epithets by staff (e.g., the n-word, pejorative terms used to describe peoples' racial, ethnic, religious, sex, gender, sexual orientation, and/or disability attributes, etc.), including when reading texts aloud, presenting multimedia (eg. podcasts, videos, movies, music), quoting, or teaching course content, is not permitted. All staff have an obligation to intervene and respond sensitively if they hear racial or other epithets uttered or used by others. For more information, refer to the HDSB Discriminatory and Harmful Language Protocol.

If a resource contains potentially harmful language (e.g., racial or other epithets) the following will be considered:

- If there is another resource that could be used to fulfil the curriculum requirement, the resource in question should not be chosen;
- The impact a resource has on students overrides the educator's intent. Staff have the obligation to acknowledge the impacts and damage on/as identified by students and their families. This may mean providing student choice and/or excluding books that may be relevant and responsive AND that may also cause further harm and trauma;
- It is expected that proactive lessons and conversations are used to contextualize and provide the groundwork to set the framework to protect and uphold the Indigenous rights and/or human rights of each learner and staff member (e.g., no aspect of a person's identity should ever be the topic of debate); and,
- Examine what voices are centred and how resources might reflect heteronormativity, patriarchy, whiteness, etc. Prioritize opportunities to centre diverse social identities. See *Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Program Requirements* (p.17)

**Note:** The Professional Misconduct regulation ([O. Reg. 437/97](#)) made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, states, "making remarks or engaging in behaviours that expose any person or class of persons to hatred on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination under Part I of the Human Rights Code." This applies to conduct and/or remarks made to anyone inside or outside the classroom, on duty or off, and via electronic means.