

# 2110 Instructional Materials Policy

## 1. Guiding Principles

- a. Maeser's primary purpose is to "empower and inspire students to learn continually, think critically, and communicate effectively through Socratic methods in order to better themselves and their community." Maeser's mission statement, as well as Maeser's motto, "Truth, Honor, Virtue", helps guide the selection of all learning materials.
- b. Learning materials used at Maeser seek:
  - i. To maintain a Classical, Liberal Arts focus;
  - ii. to support Maeser's teaching methods, including the Socratic method; and
  - iii. to maintain academic rigor and high academic standards.

## 2. Definitions

- a. "Learning material" means any learning material or resource used to deliver or support a student's learning, including textbooks, reading materials, videos, digital materials, websites, and other online applications.
- b. "Primary instructional material" means learning material, whether purchased by the school, donated to the school, or acquired through any other means, that is used as the primary source of information and instruction in the classroom.
  - i. Primary instructional materials must be approved by the Board of Directors.
  - ii. Maeser considers the following to be "primary instructional material":
    1. Textbooks, books, essays, articles, papers, poems, short stories, videos, works of art, music, software
    2. Selection of school plays, musicals, and performing arts concert selections
    3. Socratic packets
    4. Full movies
    5. Summer reading lists
    6. Classroom reading lists
    7. Winterim & MSI curriculum including guest speakers
- c. "Incidental material" means learning material that:
  - i. A teacher selects for classroom use;
  - ii. is used in addition to primary instructional materials, and includes but is not limited to:
    1. Approved educational software
      - a. Educational software must be reviewed by Maeser's Data Manager
    2. Manipulatives
    3. In-class handouts, e.g. math worksheets
    4. Special projects, activities, and lessons
    5. Pictures
    6. Quotations
    7. Video clips
    8. Other materials chosen by the teacher to be used as part of a single unit during classroom instruction, and that typically use fewer than two (2) hours of instructional time
  - iii. is not approved by the Board of Directors;

- iv. is approved by the Administration following the same expectations and guidelines as with primary instructional materials.

3. Standards for all learning materials

- a. All learning materials used as part of a Maeser education should meet the following standards:
  - i. Adheres to Maeser's mission statement and motto "Truth, Honor, Virtue";
  - ii. demonstrates a high standard of artistic quality and/or literary style;
  - iii. is age-appropriate;
  - iv. is accurate and factual;
  - v. is free from sensitive materials, as defined in Utah Code 53G-10-103;
  - vi. promotes intellectual engagement and the development of academic skills; and
  - vii. focuses on enhancing student learning and improving moral character.

4. Selection and approval of primary instructional materials

- a. All primary instructional materials must be approved by the Board of Directors in an open and public board meeting.
  - i. Before adopting or approving recommended primary instructional materials, the Board of Directors will hold at least two public meetings on the recommendation.
- b. All primary instructional materials are considered, reviewed, and recommended by the Curriculum Committee (cf. Policy 1203 Curriculum Committee) prior to being presented to the Board of Directors.
- c. In the event that Maeser contracts with another party to provide online or digital materials, the contract will include a requirement that the provider give notice to Maeser any time that the provider makes a substantive material change to the content of the online or digital materials, excluding regular informational updates on current events.

5. The use of incidental materials in the classroom

- a. Incidental materials should augment and complement instructional material, not replace it.
- b. Teachers should consider the following questions based on Maeser's guiding principles when choosing incidental materials:
  - i. Does the proposed material adhere to Maeser's mission statement and motto, "Truth, Honor, Virtue"?
  - ii. Does the proposed material promote intellectual engagement and the development of academic skills?
  - iii. Does the proposed material have significant historical value?
- c. Review of sensitive materials policies
  - i. Maeser teachers will review state and school sensitive materials policies annually.

6. Parent access to primary instructional material

- a. Maeser keeps current primary instructional materials readily accessible and available for any parent of a current Maeser student to view.
- b. Any parent of a current Maeser student may request to view primary instructional material by contacting their student's teacher and/or a school administrator.
- c. Maeser will notify parents annually how to access current primary instructional materials, as well as provide access to current instructional materials on the school website when possible.

7. Review of primary instructional material

- a. The curriculum for courses that are taught on a consistent and regular basis is reviewed on a regular basis by LEA Administrator, Administration, and/or the Curriculum Committee.
- b. Members of the Maeser community should address any concerns about specific instructional materials with the following individuals on an informal basis:
  - i. The classroom teacher or librarian responsible for the material; or
  - ii. the Director or Administration.
- c. If, after meeting with the teacher or librarian and administration, there still remains dissatisfaction, an individual may request a formal review by an instructional materials review committee.
- d. Requests for review of instructional materials are limited to the following:
  - i. A student currently enrolled in Maeser;
  - ii. a parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in and attending Maeser; or
  - iii. a school employee.
- e. Limitations in frequency
  - i. A review committee may limit reviews to one request at a time to review instructional or library materials. Multiple review committees may be formed if the number of challenges merits this action as determined by the Director, taking into account available resources so as to not disrupt carrying out the school's main functions and purpose.
    1. A review committee shall work within a reasonable timetable. The recommended time period to complete the review is within 45 school days or less.
    2. Any item which has been subject to review under this policy and retained or removed may not be subject to another request for review for three years.
- f. Requesting a review
  - i. Those who wish to file a request for review must first read or review the relevant portions of the instructional material.
    1. Students are not to be required, requested, or encouraged to complete reading or review instructional material in which they have discovered content they believe is sensitive material as defined herein.
  - ii. After having failed to resolve concerns about instructional materials as outlined above, an individual who desires to request a review shall complete the [Request for Review of Instructional Materials](#) form and file it with the school administration.
  - iii. After verifying that procedures have been properly followed, the Director shall establish a materials review committee to conduct the review.
  - iv. Anonymity of the individual submitting the learning materials challenge shall be maintained, unless the individual chooses to waive anonymity.
    1. Anonymity will also be given to committee members.
- g. Composition of the Review Committee
  - i. The Review Committee shall consist of designated members of the Curriculum Committee.
- h. Review process
  - i. Maeser will pay any costs associated with acquiring sufficient materials for the Review Committee.

- ii. The Review Committee's primary purpose is to determine whether the item contains sensitive material as defined in Utah 53G-10-103, or otherwise violates this policy.
  - 1. Before engaging in any discussions with other committee members or decision-making, each member shall read or review the item in its relevant context (for written items) or review its relevant portions (for non-written items).
  - 2. The chair shall schedule such meetings as are necessary for the committee to discuss the item and make its determination.
  - 3. The committee's determination shall be made by majority vote.
  - 4. The committee should consider, discuss, and answer the following questions:
    - a. Is the material age appropriate?
    - b. Is the material supported by generally accepted scientific standards of evidence?
    - c. Does the material focus on, enhance, or help students achieve academic skills and master the content of the class?
    - d. Does the material promote views or conduct that are false, inaccurate, threatening, harmful, hateful, or antithetical to Maeser's mission and motto?
    - e. Is the material indecent, lewd, vulgar, or obscene, as defined in Utah Code?
  - 5. The committee will make a determination as to the answer of these questions for the item being reviewed.
  - 6. Based on these findings, the committee will make a determination as follows:
    - a. The material will be **retained** and made fully accessible in the school setting.
    - b. The material will have **restricted access**:
      - i. by restricting physical access to the material and requiring parental permission to obtain access; or
      - ii. by evaluating the age-appropriate use of the material and restricting the age group for which it will be accessible.
    - c. The material contained will be **removed** from the school.
  - 7. If a book is removed, a similar book that adheres to this policy may be purchased to replace it. The replacement book shall be of similar scope and sequence.
- iii. After the committee has made its final determinations, it shall submit a written report explaining its findings and the grounds upon which their findings are based.
  - 1. A copy of the report shall be provided by the Director to the person who requested the review and to USBE: USBE Reporting Tool Utah Code § 53G-10-103(4)(b)(iii) (2022).
  - 2. The determination of the Instructional Materials Review Committee regarding materials may only be appealed to the Board of Directors on the basis of non-compliance with established policy. If non-compliance is verified by the Board of Directors, the review process shall be repeated using a new committee.
  - 3. The same materials can only be challenged for review after three years.
- iv. If a parent of a student, or a secondary student 18 and older, determines that the student's participation in a portion of the curriculum or in an activity would require the student to affirm or deny a religious belief or right of conscience or engage or

refrain from engaging in a practice forbidden or required in the exercise of a religious right or right of conscience, the parent or the secondary student may request:

1. A waiver of the requirement to participate; or
2. a reasonable alternative that requires reasonably equivalent performance by the student of the secular objectives of the curriculum or activity in question as defined in Utah Code § 53G-10-205.

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