

Scholar Academy

Policy: Selection, Approval, and Purchase of Instructional Materials Policy

Adopted: March 29, 2023

Amended: October 26, 2023

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the parameters by which Scholar Academy (the “School”) will select, approve, and purchase instructional materials.

Policy

The School shall comply with the requirements of Utah law regarding the selection, approval, and purchase of instructional materials, including but not limited to Utah Administrative Code R277-468 and R277-469 and, when applicable, Utah Code § 53G-5-404.

The School’s purpose in managing the selection, approval, and purchase of instructional materials is to implement, enrich, and support the School’s educational program. For purposes of this policy, instructional materials are the resources used by educators to deliver or support student learning. These materials may be commercially available or School-created and include such materials as textbooks, workbooks, digital resources, online courses, and multiple forms of communication media.

Criteria for Instructional Materials

Instructional materials should contribute to the intellectual development and positive character of students. These materials should be:

- (a) in alignment with the School’s educational mission and philosophy and Utah Core standards;
- (b) of high quality, research-based, and proven to be effective in supporting student learning;
- (c) objective and provide balanced viewpoint of issues;
- (d) accurate and factual;
- (e) reflective of the pluralistic character and culture of the American people and accurate in the representation of diverse ethnic groups;
- (f) consistent with the principles of individual freedom as defined in Utah Code § 53G-10-206;
- (g) appropriate to varying levels of learning;
- (h) age appropriate; and
- (i) compatible with School technology systems, of high technical quality, and easy to use.

Instructional materials should not be “sensitive materials” as that term is defined in Utah Code § 53G-10-103.

Selection and Approval of Instructional Materials by the Principal

The Board of Directors (the “Board”) delegates to the School Principal the authority and responsibility to select and approve instructional materials for the School, except under circumstances where the Board is specifically required by law to approve instructional materials. The Principal shall select and approve instructional materials that meet the criteria set forth in this policy. When considering instructional materials, the Principal shall review the Utah State Board of Education recommended instructional materials (RIMs), but the Principal is not required to select RIMs if there are other instructional materials available that meet the criteria set forth in this policy.

The Principal shall involve parents reflective of the School’s community (those who have a student who attends the School) and instructional staff in the consideration of instructional materials. The Principal has discretion as to how to involve such parents and instructional staff in this process.

Selection and Approval of Instructional Materials by the Board

If the Board is required by law to approve instructional materials for use in the classroom, the Board shall do the following (in order) prior to approving the instructional materials:

- (a) post the recommended instructional materials online to allow for public review or, for copyrighted material, make the instructional materials available at the School for public review; and
- (b) hold at least two Board meetings where the recommended instructional materials is on the agenda and allow an opportunity at those Board meetings for School educators and parents of students enrolled in the School to express views and opinions on the recommended instructional material.

The Board may approve the recommended instructional materials in an open and regular Board meeting after the requirements above have been satisfied. The vote to approve the recommended instructional materials may occur at the second of the two Board meetings described in subsection (b) above.

In accordance with Utah Code § 53G-5-404(14), the requirements in this section apply only if the Board is approving instructional materials. The requirements do not apply if the Principal is selecting and approving instructional materials (which Utah Code § 53G-5-404(14) refers to as “learning material”), nor do the requirements apply to educators’ selection of supplemental materials or resources.

Purchase of Instructional Materials

The School shall follow its Purchasing and Disbursement Policy in connection with the purchase of any instructional materials, regardless of whether the instructional materials are selected and approved by the Principal or by the Board. The School shall identify all costs associated with instructional materials prior to purchasing the instructional materials, including any implementation and professional development costs.

Educator Selection of Additional Supplemental Materials or Resources

Despite the foregoing, educators at the School may select and use supplemental materials or resources in their classroom to augment instructional materials already selected and approved by the Principal or the Board so long as each of the following are satisfied:

- (a) the educator has reviewed the supplemental materials or resources in their entirety prior to using them in the classroom;
- (b) the supplemental materials or resources meet the criteria set forth in this policy; and
- (c) the supplemental materials or resources have not previously been prohibited by the Principal or the Board.

Contract Requirements

If the School contracts with a third party to provide online or digital materials, the School shall include in the contract a requirement that the provider give notice to the School any time that the provider makes a material change to the content of the online or digital materials, excluding regular informational updates on current events.

Complaints About Instructional Materials

If a School employee or parent has a complaint about instructional materials, they shall follow the School's applicable grievance policy (i.e., Staff Grievance Policy or Parent Grievance Policy). If a complaint about instructional materials rises to the level of the Principal or the Board, the School shall include parents reflective of the School's community (those who have a student who attends the School) in reviewing the complaint. The Principal or the Board, as applicable, has discretion as to how to include such parents in this process.