SAS Guidelines for Opting Out of Instructional Materials

Guideline Goals: These guidelines are intended to help the district and district staff more consistently and effectively operationalize Policy 2523 - Instructional Materials: Opt Out Policy, which indicates that "*Parents/guardians and students have a right to inspect instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum for their student. If, after careful review of these instructional materials, a parent/guardian/student (eighteen (18) or older) identifies that the instructional materials are personally objectionable, the parent/guardian/student (eighteen (18) or older) may fill out the district opt out form. Such requests will be considered by the educational team after the appropriate district opt-out form has been submitted. Opt-out requests should be considered with respect to individual circumstances and should not place undue burden on teaching staff. Requests may not unreasonably include large portions of the curriculum.*"

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Frames

SAS DEI Statement 2019: *Saline Area Schools supports students in becoming ethical and responsible citizens. Students demonstrate this attribute when they see beyond themselves to the needs of others, contribute to their community, promote social justice, take responsibility for the environment, and demonstrate respect, empathy and compassion. SAS embraces diversity and inclusion as it strives to provide a variety of perspectives for students to consider. All students in SAS should be able to see themselves in the curriculum the district offers. Further, all students should be able to reflect and consider alternative viewpoints that exist within society. In order to provide this, the District encourages the use of resources from different backgrounds and topics.*

SAS Learning Framework: *Educators in Saline Area Schools are committed to supporting the academic, social, and emotional development of all students - valuing race, ethnicity, ability, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, and other social identities - to ensure they acquire the essential skills to be continuous learners and productive citizens in an increasingly global society.*

Commitment to Positive Partnership

Saline Schools strives to positively partner with students and their families throughout each student's educational journey. Throughout this journey, the educational environment is rich with rigorous and diverse content and experiences as aligned to the SAS District Vision and Strategic Frames. Parents/Legal guardians have the right to make educational decisions for their children and the district respects this right.

For the purpose of these guidelines, "Instructional materials" includes curriculum resources such as:

- *textbooks*
- *print and non-print resources such as assigned titles of literature, primary sources, periodicals, newspapers, slides and transparencies, models, pictures, diagrams, maps, charts, slides, choice boards*
- *electronic recordings*
- *computer applications*

**Due to the organic nature of a learning environment, "instructional materials" does not include resources that a student may self-select to enhance a project or their own learning, building/class book-a-day or one-time class read aloud, student-contributed comments, overhead/club announcements, current event connections, class/building displays, and other similar learning experiences or activities that are part of the broader learning community.*

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Decision Making Regarding Instructional Materials

Per the district's core curricular frames, Saline Schools works to establish learning experiences that most positively impact each student's success. With this in mind, **district administrators and staff are committed to -**

- complying with SAS Board Policy and State mandates;
- adhering to the Michigan Code of Educational Ethics as educators to planning, communicating, and implementing curriculum and instruction -
    - developing curriculum anchored in State standards and determining instructional resources as a part of an ongoing curriculum review cycle;
    - considering the impact of the selected materials in creating and maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, inclusive of and sensitive to multiple perspectives;
    - maintaining updated curriculum snapshots and course descriptions on the district curriculum website;
- providing to the parents/guardians of each student in the class/course the instructional resources that the teacher plans to use during the class/course
    - Resources may be in any form *(handout, list, email, or on a website accessible to the parents/guardians)* chosen by the school or teacher.

Given the district's commitment to the above areas, the district **respectfully requests that parents/legal guardians,** in order to make the most informed decision prior to requesting an opt-out, **commit to -**

- ☐ reviewing the relevant grade level content standards to understand State requirements
- ☐ reviewing the provided curriculum and instructional resources thoroughly and within the context of the goals of Saline's district vision;
- ☐ understanding that as a public educational institution that receives Federal and State funding, Saline Schools must comply with all Federal and Michigan laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin or ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, height, weight, familial status, or marital status;
- ☐ understanding Saline teachers and administrators strive to execute their duties with the utmost regard to Federal and State law and district values and policy;
- ☐ considering the scope of the request, especially within the high school structure, during which graduation credit and course sequencing are interrelated.

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Process for Requesting to Opt Out of Instructional Materials

The district respectfully requests that parents/legal guardians make the most informed decision about any request for opting a student out of instructional materials.

Please complete the following prior to advancing your request:

- ☐ I have reviewed the relevant grade level content standards to understand State requirements
- ☐ I have reviewed the provided curriculum and instructional resources thoroughly and within the context of the goals of Saline's district vision;
- ☐ I understand that as a public educational institution that receives Federal and State funding, Saline Schools must comply with all Federal and Michigan laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin or ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, height, weight, familial status, or marital status;
- ☐ I understand Saline teachers and administrators strive to execute their duties with the utmost regard to Federal and State law and district values and policy;
- ☐ I have considered the scope of the request, especially within the high school structure, during which graduation credit and course sequencing are interrelated.

If you have completed the above steps and have determined that you **would like to opt your child out** of instructional materials**, please:**

- Submit the SAS Instructional Materials Opt Out Request Form
  - The form must be submitted **in a timely manner* in relation to** receiving access to the instructional resources; doing so will ensure enough time for the request to be processed by the educational team and for the relevant teacher(s) to plan accordingly.

    **Timely manner – for example 3 business days, preferably at the beginning of the year (K-8) or trimester (K-12) upon receipt of snapshots/syllabus/core text*
  - This form will be submitted to the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning who will review the request with the indicated building administrator and/or teacher.
  - **Saline Schools does not accept third-party opt-out forms/requests.**
- Confirmation of request receipt from the Building Administrator and/or Department of Teaching and Learning **may take up to 3 business days** and may include -
  - Request for an in-person discussion
  - Clarifying questions to better understand scope of content/materials
  - Plan for alternate activity/materials

Notes:

- The parent or guardian filling out this form should understand that confidentiality cannot be assured. Therefore, sharing personal or sensitive information is not advised.
- If parents/guardians share custody, the authority to make educational decisions for their child depends on the specifics of the custody agreement or court order and will need to be adhered to as part of the request process.