

# NEW YORK CITY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

## I. MISSION AND NEEDS

The mission of the library program is to support and provoke the intellectual, social, and personal development of all students by:

- Providing physical and intellectual access to information in a warm, stimulating, and safe environment.
- Providing instruction, learning strategies, and practice in using ideas and information for effective learning.
- Integrating the library program throughout every student's education through collaboration and advocacy.

The library provides physical and intellectual access to information and enriches and supports the educational program of the school through a well-planned and maintained collection. It is the duty of the schools to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, in all appropriate languages, with diversity of appeal, and presentation of different points of view.

To this end, the New York City School Library System adopts the statement of philosophy expressed by the American Association of School Librarians in Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights (Amended July 01, 2014).

### **Access to Resources and Services in the School Library**

The school library plays a unique role in promoting, protecting, and educating about intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shape the resources and services of a school library, the principles of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights apply equally to all libraries, including school libraries. Under these principles, all students have equitable access to library facilities, resources, and instructional programs.

School librarians assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry. School librarians work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Intellectual freedom is fostered by educating students in the use of critical thinking skills to empower them to pursue free inquiry responsibly and independently. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society.

School librarians cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources that meet the needs as well as the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources that support the mission of the school district and are consistent with its philosophy, goals, and objectives. Resources in school library collections are an integral component of the curriculum and represent diverse points of view on both current and historical issues. These resources include materials that support the intellectual growth, personal development, individual interests, and recreational needs of students.

While English is, by history and tradition, the customary language of the United States, the languages in use in any given community may vary. Schools serving communities in which other languages are used make efforts to accommodate the needs of students for whom English is a second language. To support these efforts, and to ensure equitable access to resources and services, the school library provides resources that reflect the linguistic pluralism of the community.

Members of the school community involved in the collection development process employ educational criteria to select resources unfettered by their personal, political, social, or religious views. Students and educators served by the school library have access to resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval. School librarians resist efforts by individuals or groups to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, hear, or access regardless of technology, formats or method of delivery.

Major barriers between students and resources include but are not limited: to imposing age, grade-level, or reading-level restrictions on the use of resources; limiting the use of interlibrary loan and access to electronic information; charging fees for information in specific formats; requiring permission from parents or teachers; establishing restricted shelves or closed collections; and labeling. Policies, procedures, and rules related to the use of resources and services support free and open access to information.

It is the responsibility of the governing board to adopt policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. It is the responsibility of school librarians to implement district policies and procedures in the school to ensure equitable access to resources and services for all students.

Adopted July 2, 1986, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 12, 2000; January 19, 2005; January 19, 2005; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014.

The goals for collection development include:

To provide a comprehensive collection of instructional materials selected in compliance with basic written selection principles, and to provide maximum accessibility to these materials.

To provide materials that will support the curriculum, taking into consideration the individual's needs, and the varied interests, abilities, languages, socio-economic backgrounds, and maturity levels of the students served.

To provide materials for teachers and students that will encourage growth in knowledge, independent learning skills, personal and aesthetic development, and social responsibility.

To provide materials which reflect the ideas and beliefs of religious, social, political, historical, and ethnic groups and their contribution to the American and world heritage and culture, thereby enabling students to develop an intellectual integrity in forming judgments.

To provide a written statement of the procedures for meeting the challenge of censorship of materials in school library media centers.

To provide qualified personnel to maintain professional standards in collection development in order to serve teachers and students.

## **II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS**

The New York City School System is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the libraries in New York City public schools.

The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained personnel employed in the library by the school system. Selection of materials involves consultation with many people: principals, teachers, supervisors, other librarians and library teachers, students and parents where applicable.

## **III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Needs of the individual school are based on:

- A. requests of faculty and students
- B. knowledge of curriculum
- C. knowledge of student needs
- D. knowledge of student interests
- E. knowledge of the existing collection
- F. knowledge of parent needs

Materials for purchase are considered on the basis of the following criteria:

- A. overall purpose
- B. alignment with curriculum
- C. alignment with student needs and interests
- D. timeliness or permanence
- E. importance of subject matter
- F. quality of writing/production
- G. readability and popular appeal

- H. reputation of publisher/producer
- I. authoritativeness, accuracy, validity of information
- J. reputation and significance of the author/artist/composer
- K. format and price

#### **IV. PROCEDURE FOR SELECTING**

In selecting materials for purchase, the librarian or library teacher evaluates the existing collection and consults:

- A. reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids
- B. specialists from all departments and/or grade levels
- C. students and other members of the school community

In specific areas the materials specialist follows these procedures:

- A. gift materials are judged by basic selection standards and are accepted or rejected by these standards
- B. multiple items of outstanding and much-in-demand resources are purchased as needed [Note: Generally, multiple copies of the same title are not acquired except to support book discussion groups (up to 8 of the same title) or multiple-class usage of theme- or curriculum-unit related materials (3 or 4 copies of key resources)]

#### **V. WEEDING**

In order to maintain the quality of the collection, materials specialists will periodically assess the collection to identify those items that are no longer appropriate. These materials will be discarded, or weeded, from the collection following these procedures:

- A. worn or missing standard items are replaced periodically
- B. out-of-date or no longer useful materials are withdrawn from the collection

#### **VI. CHALLENGED MATERIALS**

Despite the care taken to select valuable materials for student/teacher use and the qualifications of persons who select the materials, objections will occasionally be made.

The principles of the freedom to read and the professional responsibility of the staff must be defended.

If a complaint is made, the librarian / library teacher or principal will follow the following procedures:

- A. Have a conversation with the complainant to listen carefully to his or her objections. Be courteous, help the complainant determine all facts related to the issue, state the rationale for making the material available through the library, but make no commitments for any actions.
- B. If the complainant is not satisfied, invite him to file his objections in writing and offer him a copy of "Patron's Request for Reconsideration of a Work" (see APPENDIX A) to be submitted to the principal for consideration by a Materials Evaluation Committee. The principal will ensure that all appropriate staff members are informed about the possibility of a challenge.
- C. Upon receipt of a written request for reconsideration, the principal shall inform the Office of Library Services, who will designate a Materials Evaluation Committee composed of the following representatives selected from the Region, but not the school with the challenge:
  1. A representative from the central Office of Library Services (chair)
  2. A representative from building level administration
  3. A librarian or library teacher
  4. Two classroom teachers familiar with the subject matter of the material involved
  5. Two parents
  6. A student, where appropriate
- D. No material shall be removed from use until the Materials Evaluation Committee has made a final decision.
- E. Within two weeks the Materials Evaluation Committee shall:
  1. Examine the referred materials
  2. Check general acceptance of the materials by reading reviews
  3. Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the materials as a whole
  4. Meet to discuss the material and to prepare a report (See APPENDIX B)

5. File a copy of the report in the school and central administrative offices
  6. Send a copy of the report to the complainant.
- F. The findings of the committee will be implemented.
- G. The decision may be appealed to the Executive Director of Curriculum and Professional Development.

*Adapted from Library Collection Development Policy, Fayetteville (AR) School District No. 1*

APPENDIX A

**PATRON'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF A WORK**

(Attach extra pages if needed to complete statements)

Author, composer, producer, artist, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant represents: \_\_\_\_ himself

\_\_\_\_ Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Identify other group \_\_\_\_\_

1. To what in the work do you object? Please be specific, cite exact parts and explain why you object: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What of value is there in this work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you feel might be the result of reading, viewing, or listening to this work?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. For what age group would you recommend this work? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work? \_\_\_\_\_

What pages or sections? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are you aware of the judgment of this work by critics? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Are you aware of the teacher's purpose in using this work? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What do you believe is the theme or purpose of this work? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. What would you prefer the school do about this work:

\_\_\_\_ Do not assign or recommend it to my child.

\_\_\_\_ Withdraw it from use by all students.

\_\_\_\_ Send it back to the proper department for reevaluation.

10. In its place, what work of equal value would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of a society or set of values? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the complainant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



APPENDIX B

**MATERIALS EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT FORM**

(Attach extra pages if needed to complete statements)

Physical description of challenged material: (author, title, publisher, copyright, producer, etc.)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Justification for inclusion of material (include theme and purpose)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewers' judgment of material: (if possible include copies of reviews indicating the source)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials Evaluation Committee's decision and comments: (include statement from majority and minority positions)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Copies sent to:

Superintendent\_\_\_\_\_  
Local Instructional Superintendent\_\_\_\_\_  
ED of Curriculum & Prof. Dev.\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal\_\_\_\_\_  
Librarian\_\_\_\_\_  
Office of Library Services\_\_\_\_\_  
Complainant\_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of Committee Members:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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