

Media Center Resource Selection

I. OBJECTIVES OF SELECTION

The objectives of a public school media center are to promote the intellectual, cultural, social and ethical development of students and to provide materials which extend and deepen the experiences encompassed in the curriculum. These objectives apply to all forms of information.

II. PHILOSOPHY OF SELECTION

WPS library media professionals cooperate with other school professionals in building collections of resources appropriate to the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources which support the curriculum and are consistent with the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the school district. Resources in school library media collections represent diverse points of view and current as well as historic issues. 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 media program have access to resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, doctrinal disapproval. School library media professionals resist efforts by individuals to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, or hear.

The responsibility of all WPS library media centers is:

- 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, socioeconomic backgrounds, and maturity levels of the students serviced.
- To provide materials for teachers and students that will encourage growth in knowledge and that will develop literary, cultural and aesthetic appreciation, and ethical standards.
- 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, approved by the local Board of Education, of the procedures for meeting the challenge of censorship of materials in school library media centers.
- To provide qualified professional personnel to serve teachers and students.

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III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SELECTION OF MATERIALS

The Wyandotte Board of Education is legally responsible for book selection for its school libraries, as well as for all other school activities. The Superintendent and Principal operate within policies determined by the Board. In library book selection, the responsibility is delegated to the media professionals and the teachers to make recommendations for library materials through individual and committee study. The selection of materials is a continuous and cooperative process meeting the needs of curriculum changes and additions. Even though the media professionals work closely with others in developing the collection, the final responsibility rests with the professional librarian.

IV. SELECTION AIDS

Direct examination of potential materials is invaluable in the selection process. When it is not possible, published reviews and quality selection tools must be used. Other aids in the selection process include visits to evaluation centers and other libraries and exhibits at conferences. Identification of specific titles is a joint effort among teachers, the library media staff, the students, and meets needs determined both formally and informally.

V. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Though care is taken to select valuable books for student reading, occasional objections to a selection will undoubtedly be made. Many books are open to objections in one or more general areas:

- in the treatment of ideologies, of minorities, of love and sex
- in the use of language not approved by certain segments of society
- in the type of illustrations
- in the private life or political affiliations of the author
- in questions concerning science and religion

These objections can be answered if the procedures presented below are understood and applied:

Religion - Factual, unbiased material which represents all major religions should be included in the library collection.

Ideologies - The library should make available basic factual information on the level of its students, on any ideology or philosophy which exerts a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably in government, current events, politics, education, or any other phase of life.

Sex and profanity - The fact of sexual incidents or profanity appearing in a book should not automatically disqualify it. Rather the decision should be made on the basis of whether the book presents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are realistically dealt with, and whether the book is of literary value. Factual material of an educational nature on the reading level of the students, or for teacher use should be included in the library collection.

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Science - Medical and scientific knowledge should be made available without any biased selection of facts.

VI. PROCESS OF DESELECTION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Weeding, or de-selection, should occur naturally throughout the course of the school year. However, it is often left to be accomplished when the yearly inventory is scheduled, both tasks being done simultaneously. The media professionals weed in many modes: weeding the more worn duplicates from the collection when there is not ample need or room for them; weed from the reference collection to the open stack collection; or from open stacks to repair/replace, or permanently remove.

Major criteria for de-selection are as follows:

1. Relevance of information to the curriculum.
2. Age of materials and information within.
3. Appropriateness to the defined level of users.
4. Accuracy of information.
5. Growth or change in that area (i.e. technology)
6. Biased treatment of a subject.

Different subject areas of the collection will have different ranking systems prioritizing the criteria above. Weeded-out materials shall be kept together and reviewed again by the media professionals before any permanent decision is made. Faculty of that school should be informed that items in their area of expertise are being weeded and asked for their input. The media professionals should reassure faculty that newer, more appropriate materials to support the curriculum will replace the weeded items, as the budget will allow and growing with time.

VII. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CHALLENGED MATERIALS

Any resident or employee of the school district may formally challenge resources used in the district's educational program on the basis of appropriateness. This procedure is for the purpose of considering the opinions of those persons in the schools and the community who are not directly involved in the selection process.

A. REQUEST FOR INFORMAL RECONSIDERATION

The school receiving a complaint regarding a resource shall try to resolve the issue informally:

1. The Principal or School Library Media Specialist shall explain to the questioner the school's selection procedure, criteria, and qualifications of those persons selecting the resource.
2. The Principal or School Library Media Specialist shall explain the particular place the questioned resource occupies in the education program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use, or refer the party to someone who can identify and explain the use of

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the resource. When acceptable to challenger, students may be offered alternative resources.

3. If the questioner wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of the Media Center Resource Selection Procedures and a Reconsideration Committee Information Procedures form shall be handed or mailed to the party concerned by the Principal.

B. REQUEST FOR FORMAL RECONSIDERATION

1. Each school will keep on hand and make available Reconsideration Committee Information Procedures forms (see Procedure 3000.06). All formal objections to resources must be made on these forms.
2. The Reconsideration Committee Information Procedures form shall be signed by the questioner and filed with the Principal.
3. The Superintendent shall be informed of the formal complaint received.
4. The Reconsideration Committee Information Procedures form shall be referred to the Reconsideration Committee, which reports to the Board of Education. (A Reconsideration Committee shall be appointed as needed as an Adhoc Committee of the BOE.)
5. The Reconsideration Committee shall report to the Board of Education as a whole to make the final determination.

C. RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE

1. Upon receipt of a request for formal reconsideration, the following shall take place:
 - a. Notify all involved staff members.
 - b. Appoint a Reconsideration Committee including the following members as appropriate:
 - i. One member of the District administrative staff chosen by the Superintendent.
 - ii. 2 members of the school's teaching staff (chosen by the school's Principal.)
 - iii. One School Library Media Specialist, who will act as the committee chairperson.
 - iv. One parent chosen by the Board President
 - v. One resident chosen by the Board President
 - c. Notify all members so they can prepare; supply them with the material in question, a copy of the Media Center Resource Selection Procedures and reviews of the material, if possible.
 - d. Arrange for a Reconsideration Committee meeting within ten (10) working days after the complaint is received.
2. The Reconsideration Committee may choose to consult district support staff and/or a community person with related professional knowledge.

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3. The Reconsideration Committee shall review the challenged resource and judge whether it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the District's Media Center Resource Selection Procedures.

D. RESOLUTION

1. The Reconsideration Committee shall:
 - a. Examine the challenged resource
 - b. Determine professional acceptance by reading critical reviews of the resource
 - c. Weigh values and faults and form opinions based on the material as a whole rather than on passages or sections taken out of context
 - d. Discuss the challenged resource in the context of the educational program
 - e. Discuss the challenged resource with the individual questioner when appropriate
 - f. Discuss the option of "flagging" a book for parental permission
 - g. This Adhoc Committee of the Board of Education will be considered a public body and must follow the Open Meetings Act (and may be aired live or taped and aired on cable TV later).
 - h. Prepare a written report.
2. The written report shall be discussed with the individual questioner, if requested.
3. Files will be kept on complaints and on titles that have been the source of complaints.
4. The written report shall be retained by the School Principal, with copies forwarded to the Superintendent. A minority report may be filed.
5. The Committee's decision shall be reached by simple majority of the entire Committee. This decision shall be given to the Board of Education. The decision of the Board of Education will be the final decision, which will be binding at all buildings.