



Book	Policy Manual
Section	100 Programs
Title	School Library
Code	109.1
Status	In Review
Adopted	Pending

### **Authority**

It is the responsibility of the **Pequea Valley** School Board to provide for library materials in each school's library as a resource.

The **School** Board recognizes the importance that school libraries play in supplementing and enhancing the district's educational programs offered to its students. The **School** Board understands that the contents of the district's school libraries should reflect the diversity of students' reading interests and support its overall educational mission, while at the same time recognizing that school libraries are not the sole and exclusive venues for school-aged children to gain access to reading materials.

The policy intends to delineate how the contents of school library collections are determined, maintained, and periodically reviewed, as well as explain parental/guardian rights concerning the school libraries.

### **Purpose**

The **School** Board adopts this policy for the following purposes:

1. To make clear the primary purpose of our school libraries is to promote literacy and critical thinking by providing access to an array of library materials intended to supplement the learning activities occurring in our classrooms, and promote recreational reading interests. This includes resource material, subscription databases or other such materials either made available for circulation to students within the school library or material being considered for such purposes. This term does not apply to a textbook and/or other instructional materials used within the school curriculum which are covered by Policy 108 (Textbooks).
2. To establish reasonable criteria and systems for the selection of high-quality library materials for inclusion in our school libraries by means of purchase or the acceptance of donations.

3. To establish reasonable, non-content-based criteria for the removal and discarding of library materials to ensure school library collections remain viable up-to-date and of interest to the students they serve.
4. To empower each parent/guardian to decide which library materials their children may access in the school library system.
5. To allow for a meaningful review of library materials based upon legitimate parent/guardian concerns without undermining the role of the school library to encourage freedom of inquiry and each student's right to read.

### **Definitions:**

“Opt-out” - the voluntary decision made by a parent/guardian for their own child to restrict the student's access to certain library material contained within the school library.

“Parent/Guardian” - an adult who has physical and legal custody of a school-aged child attending one of the district's schools.

“School Library” - a library within a district school where all students and school staff of that school have access to library materials.

“Selection” - the systematic selection of materials, through either the purchase or the acceptance of a donation, for inclusion in a school library in compliance with the selection criteria contained in this policy.

“Weeding” - the systematic removal and disposal of library materials from a school library based on the weeding criteria contained in this policy.

“Excessive or Gratuitous Profanity” – the pervasive use of profane, vulgar or other language that offends good taste or propriety contained within material, such that the materials taken as a whole does not offer serious literary, artistic, political, historical or scientific value for the intended student audience.

“Excessive or Gratuitous Sexuality” – the description or depiction of human genitals in a sexual manner or the fondling or touching of human genitals, buttocks or breasts in a sexual manner contained within materials, such that the material when taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interests in sex and does not offer serious literary, artistic, political, historical or scientific value for the intended student audience.

“Excessive or Gratuitous Graphic Violence” – the pervasive description or depiction of violence in a vivid, brutal or realistic manner contained with materials, such that the materials, when taken as a whole, does not offer serious literary, artistic, political, historical or scientific value for the intended student audience.

### **Library Selection Criteria**

All purchased or donated library materials selected for inclusion in school libraries shall satisfy the following objectives:

1. There will be appropriate grade level administrative and instructional staff appointed to select library materials, subject to the approval of the Superintendent or designee.
2. The process will consult a variety of reputable and well-established media sources, before selections are made. Since knowledge of content is extremely important, standard, unbiased selection tools shall be used to guide librarians in their selection.
3. Suggested Reviewing Sources
  - a. Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Notable Children's Books
  - b. School Library Journal
  - c. ACCESS PA
  - d. Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults
  - e. Kirkus Reviews
  - f. IU13 IMS Reviews
  - g. Follett Titlewave
  - h. Reading Olympics book list - IU13
  - i. Common Sense Media
4. Ensure library materials are selected by relevance, category/topic, recency of publication, reading level, fiction/non-fiction, ensuring that texts are representative of the student population and society at large. These materials will be suitable for varied interests, abilities, reading levels, and maturation of the grade levels where they are to be used.
5. Ensure a collection of library materials that is well-balanced and well-rounded in coverage of subject, types of materials, and variety of content, and age appropriate. Materials selected should include various/opposing points of view concerning problems and issues of our history and current times, in an unbiased manner so that students may develop critical reading and thinking skills.
6. Ensures that wherever possible, library materials shall represent varied segments of our society (i.e. religious, ethnic, gender, cultural groups, etc.) and their contribution to our heritage.
7. Takes into account clarity, adequacy, artistic value, format and scope of material in the selection process as well as validity, accuracy, objectivity and timeliness.
8. The materials do not contain excessive or gratuitous sexuality, excessive or gratuitous profanity, or excessive or gratuitous graphic violence.

All the above selection objectives shall be considered when assessing the suitability of library materials for inclusion within a school library. Administrative regulations may be developed to further assist how the selection criteria shall be applied at different school libraries (elementary, middle and high schools) when selecting library materials for those student populations.

The Superintendent or designee shall be responsible for the recommendation of all library materials. The actual selection of materials is accomplished by the building librarian and other professional staff under the supervision of administration. The [school](#) Board will have final approval on the proposed recommendations.

### **Donations and Gifts**

The district appreciates financial donations and gifts intended to sustain and support its school library system. Individuals or organizations wishing to make financial donations to support the district's libraries shall follow the procedures outlined in School Board Policy 702 - Gifts, Grants, Donations.

Donations or gifts of library materials may be accepted, and appropriate acknowledgement of such donations shall be made **and reported to the Board**. The district **and the Board**, reserves the right to accept or decline any donation or gift of library materials.

### **Weeding and Replacement**

The district shall take reasonable measures to ensure that school library collections of materials remain current, viable and useful to the students they serve. An active and continuous weeding program – where obsolete, duplicated or damaged library materials may be removed from the collection – is essential for maintaining school library collections.

Library materials shall be subject to weeding for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The materials are lost, physically damaged, worn or mutilated.
2. Duplicate copies of the same material that are seldom used or checked out by students.
3. Materials that contain outdated or inaccurate information.
4. Materials that have been superseded by later editions of the same title.
5. Materials no longer of interest to students as evidenced by a selection not being checked out over the past “five” school years.

The weeding criteria shall not apply to archival, historical or scientific materials stored in a school library that provide various viewpoints of information over the course of time. For example, copies of high school yearbooks, graduation ceremony programs, school newspapers or other similar materials that are maintained to preserve a school's history, local history, national and global history, would be exempt from weeding criteria.

### **Parent/Guardian Viewing/Review**

Students in the district, and their parents/guardians, will have the ability to preview the print collection of the libraries in each building using the Follett Destiny software (<https://pequeavalley.follettdestiny.com>). This software provides a basic overview of each holding in the collection. The digital collection of each building's library is held within the Sora app by Overdrive, and each title provides a summary of the plot along with basic bibliographic information within the app interface. Software access is housed on the district's website under the library curriculum tab and within the district's student Clever app/website for families to preview.

## Parental/Guardian Opt-Out for Library Materials

Pennsylvania law respects the rights of **each** parent/guardian to direct the upbringing of their children, which includes the right to make certain decisions regarding the education of their children. Consistent with these parental/guardian rights, the ~~School~~ Board ~~creates~~ ~~has provided~~ an “opt-out” procedure to empower parents/guardians to restrict their child’s access to certain library materials.

Parents/guardians shall be afforded the opportunity to review the library materials available in the school library through the Pequea Valley School District Destiny Catalog, or other electronic databases identifying the contents of school library collections.

To respect **each** parent/guardian’s wishes, while at the same time respecting the diversity of materials within school libraries, the ~~School~~ Board directs the administration to implement the following processes to allow parents/guardians to “opt-out” their children from being able to check out certain library materials from the school library as follows:

1. If material is contained within the school library, where the child attends school, the parent/guardian may email the school’s librarian and building principal their request to “opt-out”, ~~or drop off a paper “opt out” form found on the district website~~ and if willing explain their wish to restrict their child’s ability to access specific material. Parent/guardian “opt-out” requests cannot be made for general subject matters or categories of library material.
2. Upon receipt of a valid parental/guardian “opt-out” request, the school librarian shall place this restriction in the child’s Destiny Account within one week of the date of the request, subject to the number of similar requests for restrictions made at that school library at a given time. The processing of “opt out” requests may be delayed slightly when a large number are received within a short period of time.
3. This parental/guardian “opt-out” request shall remain in place throughout their child’s enrollment in the district, unless and until the parent/guardian makes an affirmative request to end the “opt-out.”

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to communicate with their children about any “opt-out” requests they make to minimize potential confusion about what library materials a child may or may not access. Such parental/guardian communications will ensure school librarians will not be the first person to alert a child to any restriction upon their ability to select library materials.

If multiple households are involved in a child’s education, parents/guardians are responsible to facilitate any decision on “opt-out” requests and to communicate with one another about any restrictions on the ability of a child to access library materials.

Parents/guardians “opt-out” requests shall not be used to substantially impair a child’s participation in assigned curricular activities. ~~All instructional staff shall be aware of the status of a student opt-out in order to respond accordingly in their instructional environment.~~

## Library Material Challenge Procedures

\_\_\_\_ or more parents/guardians of a district student attending one of the district schools and have access to the library, may formally challenge a library material **title** in their student's school library on the basis of appropriateness and that the library material failed to meet the selection criteria in this policy.

The Challenge Review Committee shall be comprised of the librarians, Superintendent's designee, and other grade level administrative and instructional staff. During the challenge procedure, the committee will ensure that any removal of a title does not discriminate against any protected class of individuals.

In making any challenge, the parent/guardian **of the district student**, shall submit their challenge in writing, which shall address each of the below requirements:

1. Verify that they are identified as a party to the challenge read and reviewed the entirety of the library material being challenged, as opposed to exclusively relying upon a third-party summary of the contents of the challenged library material.
2. Explain why they believe the inclusion of the challenged library material was not selected in compliance with the selection criteria outlined in the policy or its related administrative regulations.
3. Provide any other information that they believe is relevant to support their position that the challenged library materials should be removed from the school library.
4. Explain why the parent~~al~~/guardian "opt-out" procedures offered under this policy are inadequate to restrict their own children's access to the challenged library material in the school library.

Challenged library materials shall remain in circulation at the school library during any challenge review.

Any challenge shall be submitted to the Superintendent's designee for review and to make an initial determination. The Superintendent's designee may consult with district staff members to gather information to make an initial determination on the challenge, **which ~~The initial determination~~ shall be made within thirty (30) days of ~~the~~ receipt. ~~of a challenge~~. The initial determination shall be made in writing and explain why the challenge is either granted or **denied, which shall be provided to the Board for final determination.** A copy of the initial determination shall **also** be provided to the parents/guardians listed in the challenge. **All instructional staff shall be aware of the status of a challenged material in order to respond accordingly in their instructional environment.****

### Compliance with the Policy

The ~~School~~ Board expects **all** district staff members to comply with this policy when fulfilling their respective **teaching** responsibilities **and/or ~~in~~ reviewing ~~or~~ and selecting library materials. **This includes** weeding library materials, ~~or processing~~ and/or responding to parent~~al~~/guardian "opt out" requests or library material challenges.**