

# **DASD Library Policies**

## **Public School District Selection Policy Objectives**

Objectives are, of necessity, broad and should relate to the mission of the school and its instructional program. Instructional and library materials are selected by the school district to implement, enrich, and support the educational program and personal interests of each student.

### **School Library Selection Policy Objectives**

- To provide faculty and students with materials that enrich and support the curriculum and meet the needs of the students and faculty served
- To provide students with a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty and in a variety of formats, with diversity of appeal, allowing for the presentation of many different points of view
- To select materials that present various sides of controversial issues, giving students an opportunity to develop analytical skills resulting in informed decisions
- To select materials in all formats, including up-to-date, high quality, varied literature to develop and strengthen a love of reading.

## **School Library Responsibility for Selection**

Although the Board of Education or governing authority is legally responsible for the resources used in a school, it delegates the selection of the library's resources to its professional school library personnel. Many selection policies direct the library professional to seek recommendations and work collaboratively with others in the school community during the selection process. Teachers, students, administrators, and others participate by making recommendations; however, strong policies state that the final responsibility for the selection decisions rests with the school library professional.

## **School Library Responsibility for Selection**

The elected Board of Education shall delegate to the superintendent of schools or district administrator the authority and responsibility for selection of library materials in all formats. Responsibility for actual selection rests with professionally trained library personnel using the board's adopted selection criteria and procedures.

## **School Library Selection Criteria**

School libraries vary and include libraries in public schools, charter schools, independent private schools, schools with religious affiliations, and international schools based in countries outside the United States. Criteria for selection of materials in these libraries are dependent on the goals and objectives of the educational institution of which the library is a part of; however, there are general criteria that will fit most, if not all, school libraries.

### **School Library Selection Criteria**

#### **General Criteria:**

- Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests and learning
- Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format
- Be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected
- Incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources
- Earn favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
- Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest
- Represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues
- Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures

- Include a variety of resources in physical and virtual formats including print and non-print such as electronic and multimedia (including subscription databases and other online products, e-books, educational games, and other forms of emerging technologies)
- Demonstrate physical format, appearance, and durability suitable to their intended use
- Balance cost with need

### **Recommended School Library Reviewing/Ordering Sources:**

- Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Notable Children's Books
- Booklist
- School Library Journal
- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults
- **Scholastic - this software is used to order books AND has filter capabilities that allow the librarian to select certain grade levels and interests to suit the school it is being ordered for.**
- **Follett Library Software (Titlewave) - this software is used to order books AND has filter capabilities that allow the librarian to select certain grade levels and interests to suit the school it is being ordered for.**

**NOTE: While the filters provided by the companies and organizations listed above are usually accurate, the district librarian should do a double check of materials before purchasing, as best as possible, to make sure the materials are appropriate for the school in which they are to be used. While it is not possible, of course, to personally read every book on our shelves, should the librarian discover through any means that a book turns out to not be appropriate for a specific school, the librarian will re-evaluate the material to see if it would be better placed in another section of the library (such as YA), or in another building, or should be returned.**

## **Acquisitions Procedures in School Libraries**

Because most school libraries have only a single school librarian, that individual is responsible for creating a collection to support instruction, literacy, and students' recreational reading. Materials selection policies generally mandate that the library professional seek input from teachers, other professional staff, and students. School librarians are also responsible for weeding or de-selecting collection materials following policy guidelines as well as making a decision as to whether gift items will be accepted.

### **School Library Acquisitions Procedures**

- In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible.
- Gift materials shall be judged by the selection criteria and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.
- Selection is an ongoing process that should include removing materials that are no longer used or needed, adding materials, and replacing lost and worn materials that still have educational value.

## **School Library Special Collections**

Special collections in school libraries should reflect the unique character and mission of the schools in which these libraries serve. Within a school district, different schools may have different needs. As a result, each school library may have different priorities within its collections or special collections. Therefore, if a special collection is needed in a school library, then that school library should have a school-specific selection policy providing guidelines for the special collections in addition to the district-wide selection policy. One example is a school library with a magnet focus in specific curriculum areas. A school with a specialized curriculum may have special collections that support those areas.

## **Selecting Materials on Controversial Topics in School Libraries**

The majority of users served in school libraries are minors, and American society is often very protective of its youth. These two facts create challenges for school librarians selecting materials on a range of perspectives on topics which may be considered controversial by some in the school community. Hot button topics that may be deemed controversial and offensive to some range from LGBTQ-themed resources to politics, race relations, and sexually explicit language. Court decisions including *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969) *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District v. Pico* (1982) established that minors do have First Amendment rights in schools including the right to receive information. Ethically, school librarians find guidance for selecting resources which may be considered controversial in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the American Library Association's Code of Ethics, and the Freedom to Read Statement. Therefore, school librarians are ethically responsible to provide access to resources with varying perspectives for students' curricular and personal information needs.

### **School Library Selection of Materials on Controversial Topics**

The school board subscribes to the principles expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. It is the responsibility of the school district to provide a wide range of materials on different levels of difficulty and representing different points of view. School library professional staff will provide materials on opposing viewpoints on controversial issues to enable students to develop necessary critical thinking skills to discriminate between users of information and productive members of society.

## **School Library Gifts and Donations**

School libraries are often the beneficiaries of donations and gifts. Although these libraries frequently experience tight budgets, school librarians should thank donors for their consideration and tactfully inform donors that all donations and gifts are evaluated using the same selection criteria laid out in the selection policy as purchased materials. Additionally, school librarians might maintain a list of suggested titles that donors might purchase as gifts in honor or memory of individuals for the school library collection.

## **School Library Gifts and Donations**

Gifts and donations to the school library are accepted with the understanding that the decision for use and disposition of the materials and/or funds will be determined using the same selection criteria as purchased materials. All materials should support the curriculum and needs of library users. Gifts and donations, like purchased resources, will be removed from the collection at the end of their useful life.

## **School Library Collection Maintenance and Weeding**

School librarians should develop policies to guide collection maintenance and weeding to ensure that materials and resources are available to students and staff and also to more efficiently manage the collection. These policies should include guidance on repair, replacement, and removal of materials. Weeding of the collection should also be guided by clear policies to determine when items should be removed and if they should be replaced with newer, updated content. Conducting regular inventories of the collection is also an essential component of collection maintenance and weeding.

Collection maintenance and weeding policies should also specify who repairs materials and is responsible for weeding and inventory. Policies should provide guidance about disposal of weeded items.

## **School Library Collection Maintenance and Weeding**

Annually, the school librarian will conduct an inventory of the school library collection and equipment. The inventory can be used to determine losses and remove damaged or worn materials which can then be considered for replacement. The inventory can also be used to deselect and remove materials that are no longer relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students. Additionally, school librarians should develop a collection maintenance plan that includes systematic inspection of materials that would result in weeding outdated, damaged, or irrelevant materials from the collection.

\*Items that need to be weeded are based on a Titlewave Analysis of the collection after Inventory. Any materials that are outdated are reassessed and then removed if the information is considered not valid to the current information being taught. (Example: In DMS, the collection is on a rotation for weeding and reassessment by subject).

## **Policy Revision**

*Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries*

No policy remains valid forever. Internal or external changes may impact a library policy and result in the need for policy revision. All library policies, including the selection policy, should be reviewed for necessary revisions on a regular schedule.

## **Reconsideration**

*Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries*

Community members will voice concerns or submit formal complaints to library materials. Libraries need to have a policy and procedure in place to handle these objections. This policy should establish the framework for registering a complaint that provides for a review process with appropriate actions while defending the principles of freedom of information, the right of patrons to access materials, and the professional responsibility and integrity of the librarians involved in the selection process. The principles of intellectual freedom are inherent in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and are expressed in the Library Bill of Rights, adopted by the Council of the American Library Association. If materials are questioned, the principles of intellectual freedom should be defended rather than the materials.