

Community Relations

COMPLAINTS CONCERNING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

E(2) 1312.2



Pasadena Unified School District
Library Materials Selection Procedures
Re: Board Policies 1312.2 and 6163.1

Mission

The Pasadena Unified School Libraries serve as hubs of literacy and learning for the Pasadena Unified community by providing resources, instruction, and programming that foster personal, academic, cultural, and professional growth.

Vision

- We elevate literacy by curating and promoting a collection of materials that represent the diverse human experience and provide a window into possibility.
- We nurture the love of reading, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and the ethical use of information by providing access to quality information in addition to providing instruction on information literacy, analyzing sources, and proper citation and attribution.
- We collaborate with the PUSD faculty to support academic learning and digital literacy, lead opportunities for professional development, and integrate emerging technologies.
- We welcome partnerships with the Pasadena and global community to share resources and opportunities for real-world connections to support curriculum, cultural connections, and inspirational possibilities for our students.
- We promote intellectual freedom by ensuring equitable access to library materials and programs and by maintaining an inclusive collection that reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity and individual interests of our school community.
- We maintain welcoming physical and virtual spaces that nurture the social-emotional health of students, offer opportunities for academic and creative collaboration, and immerse students in a culture of reading.
- We share knowledge, expertise, and resources with parents and caregivers to help them support their children.

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- We advocate for the diverse needs of our students.

Support for Intellectual Freedom

The school libraries of the Pasadena Unified School District are guided by the principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretative statements, including “Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program” and The Students’ Right to Read statement of the National Council of Teachers of English. See Appendix (in this policy) for the Library Bill of Rights, “Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program,” and The Students’ Right to Read statement.

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 educational 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
- To include a diverse representation of experiences and authorship

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 with California Teacher Librarian Service Credentials using the board’s adopted selection criteria and procedures.

School Library Selection Criteria

General Criteria:

- Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students’ personal interests and learning

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- Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format
- Be appropriate for the subject area, 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 professionally trained personnel
- Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest
- Represent differing viewpoints on 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 issues of cost, need, and space

A Collection of Recommended School Library Reviewing Sources:

- Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Notable Children's Books
- Booklist
- School Library Journal
- We Need Diverse Books website
- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults
- Titlewave
- Kirkus
- The Graphic Library
- Common Sense Media

[Additional Review Resources](#)

Acquisitions Procedures

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- 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.
- Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, students, district personnel, and community members, as appropriate.
- Gift materials shall be judged by the selection criteria and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria. Final decisions on the acceptance of gift materials shall be made by the librarian.
- 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.

Special Collections

Some school sites may have special collections related to their instructional focus or the history of their institution/community. Librarians at individual school sites will balance the goals of access, use, and preservation of materials within special collections.

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. Because it is necessary for productive citizens to be able to discern and evaluate a variety of information sources, school library professional staff will provide materials reflecting opposing viewpoints on controversial issues to enable students to develop necessary critical thinking skills.

Gifts and Donations

Gifts and donations to the school library may be accepted with the understanding that the decision for use and disposition of the materials and/or funds will be determined by the librarian 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.

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Collection Maintenance and Weeding

School librarians maintain the library collection. The school librarian will conduct an inventory of the school library collection and equipment as needed. 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. The weeding of materials is a regular and ongoing process to keep the collection up to date and relevant.

Weeding (or the deselection of material) is critical to collection maintenance and involves the removal of resources from the collection. All materials are considered for weeding based on accuracy, currency, and relevancy. Space limitations, edition, format, physical condition, and number of copies are considered when evaluating physical materials. While weeding is essential to the collection development process, it should not be used as a deselection tool for controversial materials.

Reconsideration Policy

Despite the careful selection of library resources and the qualification of those involved in the selection process, objections to library resources that are deemed offensive or inappropriate may occur. Any resident, employee, or student of the school district may express an informal concern or formal request for reconsideration of a library resource.

Procedures for Handling Informal Complaints

Persons with a complaint about library print or digital resources should state their concerns to the school librarian or principal. The librarian or principal will listen attentively to the concerns and attempt to resolve the issue informally. As part of the discussion, the school employee will explain the library's selection policy, selection criteria, diversity of the collection with resources from many points of view, and the selection process. Additionally, each parent/guardian has the right to determine the appropriateness of library resources for their children and should accord the same right to other families.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the librarian or principal will explain the formal reconsideration process and provide the individual with a copy of the school district's library

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selection policy with reconsideration procedures and a request for reconsideration of library resources form. If there is concern about multiple items, a separate form must be completed for each item. All complaints to staff members shall be reported to the building principal, whether received by telephone, letter, or in personal conversation. No library resources should be removed or restricted from use as a result of the informal complaint.

If the completed and signed formal request for reconsideration form has not been received by the principal within ten business days, the matter shall be considered closed.

Procedures for Handling Formal Complaints

The following procedures should be followed if, after discussing the questioned resource, no resolution is made.

1. The complainant should be referred to the principal. The complainant must identify the specific school which holds the title being challenged and begin the complaint process at the school site.
2. The complainant who is dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be offered resources which include the library's mission statement, selection policy, request for reconsideration of instructional resources form, and the [Library Bill of Rights](#).
3. The complainant is required to complete and submit the reconsideration form to the principal within ten business days.
4. If a completed reconsideration form is not submitted within ten business days, the matter is considered closed.
5. Upon receipt of the form, the principal should notify and provide a copy of the reconsideration form to the following individuals:
 - a. Superintendent
 - b. Director of Curriculum and Instruction
 - c. PUSD Library Department (that shall include PUSD certificated teacher librarians and their department lead)
 - d. Chief Academic Officer
6. The work in question will remain on library shelves and in circulation until a formal decision is made.

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7. At least twice each school year (by the end of October and March), the Preliminary Reconsideration Committee will review all complaint forms for library materials. Valid forms will be forwarded to site principals with procedures for forming a School Level Reconsideration Committee. The complainant will be notified if their complaint form is valid and moving to the next phase as well as their responsibilities in the process.
8. The School Level Reconsideration Committee will be appointed by the principal and consist of the following individuals:
 - a. teacher
 - b. building level administrator
 - c. credentialed PUSD school librarian (preferably the librarian at the school where the complaint originates)
 - d. reading specialist or language arts teacher
 - e. member of the community
 - f. a student (middle or high school level)
9. Within ten days of receiving notice that the complaint is moving forward for review by the School Level Reconsideration Committee, the complainant will provide the school librarian or principal with six copies of the resource for the School Level Reconsideration Committee to review and can try to obtain copies of the book through loans from public libraries for this purpose.
10. The school librarian will provide the School Level Reconsideration Committee with a short formal Intellectual Freedom training that includes the library's mission statement, selection policy, the [Library Bill of Rights](#), the completed reconsideration form, reviews of the resource being reconsidered, and a list of awards or honors, if any. This packet should be created with assistance from the state department of public instruction and the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom.
11. The School Level Reconsideration Committee should schedule a formal reconsideration meeting within 30 days after the principal receives both the written request for reconsideration and the copies of the book from the complainant. The principal should notify the complainant, the superintendent, the director of curriculum and instruction, and the school library department director as to this schedule.
12. The School Level Reconsideration Committee must follow the procedures listed below:

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- a. At the initial meeting, the principal and committee will review reconsideration committee guidelines and procedures. A school administrator should fully participate in the reconsideration process.
 - b. A member of the committee will keep minutes.
 - c. All committee members should fully review the resource (read or view the entire work) before voting.
 - d. The complainant must make an initial verbal presentation about the resource under reconsideration or may choose to share the written form. The complainant must provide sources for quotes or information used during this presentation. If the complainant does not appear before the committee, then the matter is closed.
 - e. The complainant may not participate in or observe the committee's deliberations unless invited to do so by the committee. The committee chair may choose to give committee members time to ask questions.
 - f. During the initial or subsequent meetings, the committee will make its decision determined by the simple majority to retain, move the resources to a different level, or remove the resource. This will be a secret ballot vote.
 - g. The principal presents the committee's written decision (including a minority report if needed) to the complainant, the superintendent of schools, the director of curriculum and instruction, and the school library department director within five school days after the decision is made.
 - h. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at the school level, a written appeal can be made within 10 school days to a system-level Educational Resource Reconsideration Committee. This request should be delivered to the superintendent of schools.
13. The District-Level Reconsideration Committee **will meet at least annually** to consider any appeals from the school level. The committee will be appointed by the Superintendent or his/her designee as follows:
- a. Director of school library services
 - b. Director of elementary, middle, or secondary education, as appropriate
 - c. Curriculum coordinator specializing in reading from the appropriate level
 - d. District-level library services staff
 - e. Credentialed PUSD school librarian from the appropriate level
 - f. Other district-level instructional directors

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- f. Decisions on reconsidered materials will stand for five years before new requests for reconsideration of those items will be entertained.

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Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form (Level 1: Initial Request)

Despite the careful selection of library resources and the qualification of those involved in the selection process, objections to library resources that are deemed offensive or inappropriate may occur. Any resident, employee, or student of the school district may express an informal concern or formal request for reconsideration of a library resource. The school board of Pasadena Unified School District has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to the school library professional staff and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of library resources, please return the completed form to the coordinator of library media resources (or principal). This form must be completed in its entirety for each title that you would like to be reconsidered.

Pasadena Unified School District

351 S. Hudson Ave.

Pasadena, CA 91109

Date _____

Name _____

Address (PO Box/business address not accepted) _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent self? ____ Or an organization? ____ Name of Organization _____

How are you affiliated with PUSD? _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

____ Book (e-book) ____ Movie ____ Magazine ____ Database ____ Audio Recording ____ Digital Resource ____ Other

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Title _____

Author/Producer _____

1. Is the resource part of the curriculum, library collection, or other?

2. At which PUSD school are you questioning the use of this resource?

3. How have you confirmed the availability of this resource at this PUSD school?

4. What brought this resource to your attention?

5. Have you read, viewed, or listened to the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

6. What concerns you about the resource?

7. What resource(s) have you found that provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

8. What action are you requesting the committee to consider?

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Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form (Level 2: Appeal)

Despite the careful selection of library resources and the qualification of those involved in the selection process, objections to library resources that are deemed offensive or inappropriate may occur. Any resident, employee, or student of the school district may express an informal concern or formal request for reconsideration of a library resource. The school board of Pasadena Unified School District has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library resources to the school library professional staff and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the next step if a complainant has additional evidence to contest the decision of the School-Level Reconsideration Committee. If you wish to move forward with appealing the initial decision, please return the completed form to the PUSD Library Department. This form must be completed in its entirety for each title that you would like to be considered for appeal.

Pasadena Unified School District

351 S. Hudson Ave.

Pasadena, CA 91109

Date _____

Name _____

Address (PO Box/business address not accepted) _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent self? ____ Or an organization? ____ Name of Organization _____

How are you affiliated with PUSD? _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

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___ Book (e-book) ___ Movie ___ Magazine ___ Database ___ Audio Recording ___ Digital Resource ___ Other

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

1. Is the resource part of the curriculum, library collection, or other?

2. At which PUSD school are you questioning the use of this resource?

3. How have you confirmed the availability of this resource at this PUSD school?

4. What brought this resource to your attention?

5. Have you read, viewed, or listened to the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

6. What concerns you about the resource?

7. What resource(s) have you found that provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

8. What action are you requesting the committee to consider?

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Letter to Person Requesting Reconsideration

Dear _____:

We appreciate your concern over the use of _____ in our school district. The district has a policy for selecting materials, but realizes that not everyone will agree with every selection made.

To help you understand the selection process, we are sending copies of the district's:

1. Instructional goals and objectives
2. Library Materials Selection Procedures statement
3. PUSD Board Policy 6163.1, Library Media Centers
4. Procedure for Handling Formal Complaints
5. Request for Reconsideration of Material form

If you are still concerned after you review this material, please complete the enclosed Request for Reconsideration of Material form and return it to me. **You may be assured of attention to your request according to our policies and procedures.** If I have not heard from you within two weeks, we will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint.

Sincerely,

Principal

Date

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Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

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Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of “age” reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations): <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations>.