

**District: LNSU**

**Procedure: Selection of Library Materials (D22)**

I. Purpose and Guiding Principles

The purpose of this document is to establish a consistent and transparent procedure for the selection, deselection, and reconsideration of library materials in LNSU. These procedures align with the principles of intellectual freedom as outlined in the Library Bill of Rights, the 2004 American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement, and Vermont's 2024 Freedom to Read Statement. The district is committed to ensuring access to diverse perspectives, supporting curriculum needs, and fostering a lifelong love of reading among students. All policies and procedures will comply with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Vermont state laws prohibiting discrimination in places of public accommodation.

II. Responsibilities for Library Materials Management

1. The selection and maintenance of library materials are the responsibility of certified library media specialists employed by LNSU.
2. The library collection will reflect diverse perspectives, support curricular needs, and foster intellectual curiosity while upholding the principles of equity, inclusion, and access.
3. Library Media Specialists will collaborate with teachers, administrators, and students in selecting and maintaining collections.
4. Donated materials will be subject to the same selection and deselection criteria as purchased materials.
5. The library will ensure compliance with Act 150 of 2024 (codified as 16 V.S.A § 1624) and the Education Quality Standards (State Board Rule Series 2000), promoting intellectual freedom and access to materials that reflect Vermont's diverse people and history, including diversity of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, religion, and political beliefs.

III. Selection of Library Materials

In selecting materials, the library media specialist will:

1. Assemble, preserve, and administer materials that enrich and support the curriculum and student interests at various reading levels.
2. Ensure that selections encompass diverse viewpoints, foster the exchange of ideas, cultivate an informed and engaged community, and support individual intellectual and personal development.
3. Consult sources such as professional review journals, standard lists of basic works, collection development guides, recommendations of other professionals, and bibliographic essays prepared by specialists in the field for the selection of materials (resources may include, but are not limited to, School Library Journal, The Horn Book,

Kirkus, National Science Teaching Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and Booklist).

4. Consider factors such as literary and artistic quality, age appropriateness, accuracy, and relevance to students' research, independent reading interests, and educational needs.
5. Encourage recommendations from students, faculty, and the community while maintaining professional discretion over final selections.
6. Ensure alignment with the district's mission, curriculum goals, and policies on equity and intellectual freedom.

#### IV. Deselection of Library Materials ("Weeding")

To maintain an up-to-date and relevant collection, materials will be periodically reviewed for removal or replacement. The criteria for deselection include:

1. Poor physical condition (damaged, missing pages, excessive wear).
2. Outdated or inaccurate content, particularly in non-fiction materials.
3. Lack of circulation or student interest for five or more years.
4. Excess duplicate copies that are no longer in demand.
5. Content that no longer aligns with curriculum needs or the district's mission.
6. Materials that promote harmful stereotypes, discrimination, or misinformation.

Deselected materials may be discarded, offered to teachers or students, or donated when appropriate.

#### V. Reconsideration of Library Materials

Occasionally, objections to library materials may be made by parents, guardians, staff, or community members of the LNSU. LNSU supports the principle of intellectual freedom inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and is further expressed in the Library Bill of Rights (Appendix A). A formal procedure has been established to respond to a request for the reconsideration of materials. Materials that are challenged will not be removed at the moment of challenge; they will remain in circulation until the final decision is determined.

Pursuant to 16 VSA 1624(b) school library materials shall not be removed for the following reasons:

1. partisan approval or disapproval;
2. the author's race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation,
3. political views, or religious views;
4. school board members' or members of the public's discomfort, personal morality, political views, or religious views;
5. the author's point of view concerning the problems and issues of our time, whether international, national, or local;

6. the race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, political views, or religious views of the protagonist or other characters; or
7. content related to sexual health that addresses physical, mental, emotional, or social dimensions of human sexuality, including puberty, sex, and relationships.

These are the particular steps to follow for those individuals wishing to have a material's inclusion in the collection reconsidered:

#### *A. Informal Resolution*

1. A complainant who believes that material violates district policies or fails to meet selection criteria must first raise this concern with the school library media specialist.
2. The library media specialist will explain the selection criteria and rationale for inclusion.
3. If concerns persist, the complainant may submit a formal Request for Reconsideration form per each item requested for reconsideration. The school library media specialist will explain the formal reconsideration process and provide:
  - a. a copy of the Selection of Library Materials Policy,
  - b. a copy of the Procedures for Selection of Library Materials, and
  - c. a copy of the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form.

#### *B. Formal Reconsideration Process*

1. The completed and signed Request for Reconsideration Form must be submitted to the library media specialist within 10 days of receiving the form, or the matter shall be considered closed.
2. Upon receipt of the completed Request for Reconsideration Form, the school library media specialist will inform the principal and appoint a Reconsideration Committee within five (5) school days.
3. The Committee will consist of the principal (chair), a library media specialist, at least one classroom teacher, a parent, and a student when appropriate.
4. The Committee will:
  - a. Read, review, or listen to the material in its entirety.
  - b. Assess the merit of the complaint by determining if the material violates district policies or fails to meet selection criteria.
5. A written decision will be issued within thirty (30) school days of the Committee's appointment. The Committee will prepare a summary report to be shared with the complainant containing its decision. The report will reference the selection criteria and cite any authorities used in reaching decisions.
6. If the complainant is dissatisfied, they may appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will read, review, or listen to the material and review the Committee's decision, schedule an appeal hearing with the complainant, and render a decision within thirty (30) school days.
7. The challenged material will remain available throughout the review process unless deemed by the Superintendent to be in direct violation of the library selection policy. Reasons for immediate removal can not violate 16 V.S.A § 1624.

8. The District will not reconsider material for a second time on the same grounds within a five-year period. Previous decisions on material under the formal reconsideration process will be taken into account when considering new Requests for Reconsideration of the same material.
9. The District will consider only one Request for Reconsideration at a time. If a second Request is submitted while a Reconsideration Committee is already in the process of reconsidering material, the timelines in this section will begin as of the date the Committee issues its written decision on the first Request. Requests for Reconsideration will be considered in the order in which they are received.

#### VI. Appendices

Appendix A: ALA Library Bill of Rights & Freedom to Read Statement

Appendix B: Request for Reconsideration Form

Appendix C: Reconsideration Committee Report

## **Appendix A**

### American Library Association: Guiding Documents

#### **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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. 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.
7. 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.

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.

## Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

- *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

- *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

- *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

- *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can

machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

- *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

- *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

- *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

## Appendix B

### Request for Reconsideration Form

Instructions: This form is to be completed by individuals requesting reconsideration of a library material. Please provide detailed responses to ensure a thorough review. The completed form should be submitted to the school library/media specialist.

#### Complainant Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation with District A (Parent, Student, Community Member, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Material Information:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Creator: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher/Producer: \_\_\_\_\_

Format (Book, eBook, Audiobook, Video, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Reason for Requesting Reconsideration:

1. How did this material come to your attention?

2. Have you read, viewed, or listened to the entire material? (Yes/No)  
If not, which sections have you reviewed?

3. What concerns do you have about this material? (Please be specific, citing page numbers or scenes if applicable.)

4. What do you believe might be the result of exposure to this material?

5. Are there materials you would suggest to provide a balanced perspective?

6. What action are you requesting regarding this material? (Check one)

Removal from library collection

Restriction to specific age groups

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Additional Comments:

Signature and Date:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C**

**Reconsideration Committee Report**

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

Has every member of the committee read the material entirely? If not, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

Resources consulted: (include policies, articles, reviews etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reconsideration Committee recommends:

\_\_\_\_\_

Justification and comments: (include majority and minority positions)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of Reconsideration Committee Members:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This report is forwarded to: