

## **5.20 -- SELECTION POLICY FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY MATERIALS**

### **I. Selection Objectives**

School library materials will be selected by the Van Buren School District to support and enrich the educational program. Materials will serve both the breadth of the curriculum and the needs and interests of the faculty and students. It is the obligation of the Van Buren School District to provide for a wide range of abilities and to respect the diversity of many differing viewpoints.

Library materials are defined as all electronic, print, and non-print resources, excluding textbooks, used by students and teachers for the District's educational program.

### **II. Responsibility for Selection**

The Van Buren Board of Education, by state law, is ultimately responsible for all books and materials used in the Van Buren public school system. Responsibilities for actual selection of school library materials shall rest with the certified school library media specialist and other professionally trained personnel, who shall discharge this obligation consistent with the Boards' adopted selection criteria and procedures. The library media specialist will work cooperatively with staff members to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selections.

### **III. Criteria for Selection**

The following general selection criteria will apply to all materials, including electronic, print and non-print resources.

1. Library materials shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals for the state and district and the aims and objectives of the individual schools and specific courses. Said materials shall reflect the Van Buren School District's adherence to the goal representing state educational standards. Library materials shall meet high standards of quality in factual content, artistic and literary value, and presentation.
2. Library materials shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning style, and social development of the students for whom materials are selected.
3. Library materials shall meet the needs and interests of students and faculty.

4. Library materials will place principle above opinion and reason above prejudice in selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of each school library media center.
5. Materials are considered based on the representation of opposing sides of controversial issues in order to develop critical reading, listening, viewing and thinking.
6. In selecting materials, media specialists will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, and other appropriate sources for review of purchased materials.
7. Non-print materials will be selected to represent the above-mentioned criteria, as well as purchasing materials that are compatible with available technology.
8. Selection of materials is an on-going process which should include the removal of materials no longer appropriate to the school's needs.
9. Materials which are gifts to the Library Media Center shall be evaluated for inclusion into the collection according to the same criteria mentioned above.

#### **IV. Policies on Intellectual Freedom**

The school board subscribes in principle to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*, a copy of which is a part of this policy.

##### **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.

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Adopted June 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; amended June 28, 1967; amended January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 24, 1996.

### **Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program**

#### ***An Interpretation of the LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS***

The school library media program plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shapes the resources and services of a school library media program, the principles of the Library Bill of Rights apply equally to all libraries, including school library media programs.

School library media specialists assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry. School library media specialists work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society.

School library media specialists cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources appropriate to the needs and to the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources that support the mission of the school district and are consistent with its philosophy, goals, and objectives. Resources in school library media collections are an integral component of the curriculum and represent diverse points of view on both current and historical issues. These resources include materials that support the intellectual growth, personal development, individual interests, and recreational needs of students.

While English is, by history and tradition, the customary language of the United States, the languages in use in any given community may vary. Schools serving communities in which other languages are used make efforts to accommodate the needs of students for whom English is a second language. To support these efforts, and to ensure equal access to resources and services, the school library media program provides resources that reflect the linguistic pluralism of the community.

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, or doctrinal disapproval. School library media specialists resist efforts by individuals or groups to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, hear, or access via electronic means.

Major barriers between students and resources include but are not limited to imposing age or grade level restrictions on the use of resources; limiting the use of interlibrary loan and access to electronic information; charging fees for information in specific formats; requiring permission from parents or teachers; establishing restricted shelves or closed collections; and labeling. Policies, procedures, and rules related to the use of resources and services support free and open access to information.

The school board adopts policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. School library media specialists implement district policies and procedures in the school.

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Adopted July 2, 1986, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 12, 2000; January 19, 2005.

## V. Objections

Despite the quality of the selection process, occasional objections to materials in the library and instructional materials collection may be raised. No questioned material shall be removed from the school pending a decision. In the case of a complaint, the following procedures shall be followed.

1. The person receiving the complaint should try to resolve the problem informally. Often, an explanation of selection policies, procedures and criteria, plus an explanation of the items placed in the collection and curriculum will suffice.
2. Should an initial discussion not resolve the problem, the complainant should next be sent to the principal or the school library media specialist for further clarification of the district's policy. If still unsatisfied, the complainant should complete a written complaint form. The following procedure will then go into effect.
  1. The form is returned to the building and/or supervising principal within 10 days after receiving the form.
  2. The principal will forward the form to the district Elementary or Secondary Curriculum Director, whomever is appropriate, who will convene the Reconsideration Committee within twenty working days. They will be provided with copies of the challenged material and appropriate review sources to prepare them for the meeting.

The Reconsideration Committee to handle written objections to library and instructional materials will include the following:

- One school library media specialist from another building in the school district.
- The principal in the building involved
- One teacher with curriculum knowledge
- Curriculum Director for the appropriate level
- Parent

The Curriculum Director will chair the committee. The Reconsideration Committee shall read the material in question, the objection(s) raised and professional reviews of the material. The committee shall vote by secret ballot to determine whether the contested material shall be removed from the media center's collection.

3. The Reconsideration Committee's majority decision will be presented in writing to the complainant and the Superintendent within 5 days after the decision is made. The summary of the decision will include relevant professionally prepared selection aids and reviews when available.

4. Further objections to the committee's decision, by either party, may appeal the committee's decision to the district Board of Directors by filing a written appeal to the Superintendent within 5 working days of the committee's decision or of written receipt of the decision. The Superintendent shall present the original complaint and the committee's decision along with the summary of its reasons for its position plus a recommendation of the administration to the Board within 30 days of the date of the appeal. The board shall review the material submitted to them by the Superintendent and make a decision within 30 days of receipt of the information. The Board's decision is final.

Once a piece of library material has been challenged and determined to be appropriate, that piece of material shall not be submitted or considered for removal again.

Approved by Board of Education 05/20/08  
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