

# Selection Policy for School Library Materials at Heritage Hills

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### **Philosophy of the Library / Instructional Materials Center**

We are living in an information age. A primary objective of education is to learn how to identify, locate, organize, and present needed information in a clear, concise, and persuasive manner. As technologies change, students need to develop skills to manage complex information formats. The school library program, as an integral part of the total curriculum, is the vehicle that provides opportunities for students to achieve these skills and to foster a lifelong interest in both reading and knowledge. Each student, therefore, should have access to an effective, integrated school library program that reflects the curriculum and the needs of the school community and the world in general.

## II. SELECTION GOALS

The selection of library materials is guided by the principles that originated with the American Association of School Librarians and were modified to properly meet the needs of Heritage Hills.

- Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials.
- Identify materials that will add to the students' fund of factual knowledge.
- Select materials that stimulate growth in literary appreciation, aesthetic standards, and ethical judgment.
- Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that students are required to weigh alternatives and think critically.
- Provide selections that represent the full range of religious, ethnic, cultural groups that make up our society.
- Identify materials that support and enrich the ever changing curricula of the school.
- Select materials that are suited to the wide range of interests produced by the abilities and maturity levels of the students served.

### **III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION**

Responsibilities for selection of school library materials shall rest with the certified school librarian, and other professionally trained personnel, who shall discharge this obligation consistent with the Board's adopted selection criteria and procedures. The librarian will work cooperatively with staff members to interpret and guide the application of the policy in making day-to-day selections.

### **IV. PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION**

Materials for the school library are selected by the professional library staff in collaboration with the faculty, parents, and students. Professionally recognized selection sources are consulted. These may include those listed in Appendix A. Evaluation and selection is based on the criteria for selection and the curricular and personal needs of the school community.

### **V. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

The ability of the library to meet the needs of school community depends to a great extent on the quantity, scope, and quality of the materials available in the collection. The most important consideration for any item is whether it contributes to the fulfillment of the curriculum and meets the individual needs of the students and teachers.

It is the obligation of the library to provide a diversity of points of view so that users may develop the practice of critical analysis.

Each item is considered individually. Materials are selected for their strengths, based on criteria that are most applicable to that particular work.

Criteria for evaluation of nonfiction works:

- Authoritativeness/reputation of the author and/or publisher
- Timeliness, permanence, and relevance of the item to the curriculum.
- Accurate content
- Logical organization and presentation of information
- Impartiality/nonjudgmental point of view/freedom from bias or presentation of various points of view depending on need
- Readability and popular appeal
- Avoidance of stereotyped images of any group or individual

- Suitability for the physical and emotional development and the varied learning styles of the students
- Value commensurates with cost and/or need
- Physical durability

Additional criteria for the evaluation of fiction works:

- Readability and effectiveness in sustaining the reader's interest
- Believable, logical, and well constructed plot
- Convincing and multidimensional characterization
- Effective use of language and dialogue
- Originality, literary merit, and aesthetic value
- Presentation of human emotions, values, and ideas

## **VI. REEVALUATION OF THE COLLECTION**

The selection process begins with the evaluation of materials for purchase. It ends with the evaluation of materials to be discarded. Materials which are out-of-date or inaccurate do not support the goals of the library or the school. Weeding such materials is an essential and ongoing part of the collection development process carried out by the librarian.

Criteria for weeding undesirable materials:

- Currency: Subject matter is out of date, factually inaccurate, or no longer relevant to the educational program or no longer meets the criteria established for selection.
- Dispensability: Duplicate copy or copies no longer needed in the collection.
- Physical condition: Worn, torn, soiled; pages or parts missing; unable to be repaired.
- Record of use: Item not circulated in five years.

## **VII. CRITERIA FOR GIFTS AND UNSOLICITED MATERIALS**

Gifts and unsolicited materials must meet the following general selection criteria in order to be accepted and become a part of the school library collection:

1. Gifts and unsolicited materials must support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the state and district and the aims and objectives of the individual schools and specific courses.
2. Gifts and unsolicited materials must meet high standards of quality in factual content, artistic and literary value, and presentation.
3. Gifts and unsolicited materials must be current and up-to-date
4. Gifts and unsolicited materials must be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social development of students for whom materials are selected.
5. Physical format and appearance of gifts and unsolicited materials must be suitable for their intended use.

## **VIII. POSITION ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM**

Heritage Hills Media Center subscribes in principle to the statements of policy on library philosophy as expressed in the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association, a copy of which is appended to this policy statement (Appendix B). The principles of intellectual freedom expressed in the Library Bill of Rights are inherent in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States. In the event library materials are questioned, the principles of intellectual freedom shall be defended.

## **IX. POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING CHALLENGED MATERIAL**

The school recognizes the rights of individuals to challenge materials included in the library collection. All complaints to staff members shall be reported to the building principal involved, whether received by telephone, letter, or in personal conversation. In the interest of handling all complaints fairly the following procedures will be followed:

1. The criticism is to be addresses to the principal in writing, and shall include:
  - Author
  - Title
  - Publisher
  - The complainant's familiarity with the material objected to
  - Sections objected to, by page and item
  - Reasons for objection

2. Upon receipt of the information, the principal may appoint a review committee
3. The committee, in evaluating the questioned material, may be guided by the following criteria:
  - the appropriateness of the material for the age and maturity level of the students with whom it is being used
  - the accuracy of the material
  - the objectivity of the material
  - the use being made of the material
4. The material in question may be withdrawn from use pending the committee's recommendation to the Superintendent.
5. The committee's recommendation shall be reported to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will advise the complainant, in writing, of the committee's recommendation and advise the Board of the action taken or recommended.
6. The complainant may appeal this decision, within ten (10) business days, to the Board through a written request to the Superintendent, who shall forward the request and all written material relating to the matter to the Board.
7. The Board shall review the case and advise the complainant, in writing, of its decision.

No challenged material may be removed from the curriculum or from a collection of resources materials except by action of the Board, and no challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive to some. Any Board action to remove material will be accompanied by the Board's statement of its reasons for the removal.

# Selection Policy Appendix A

## Selection Sources

### I. Reviews of Current Books

- *Book Links*. American Library Association/A Booklist Publication (Chicago, IL). [bimonthly]
- *Booklist*. American Library Association's Publishing Committee (Chicago, IL). [twice monthly Sept. through June and monthly July and August]
- *School Library Journal*. Bowker Publishing (New York, NY). [Monthly, Sept.-June, July/August combined].

### II. Retrospective Sources for Books

- *Children's Catalog*, 15th edition. New York: H.W. Wilson, 1986. Four supplements, 1987-90.
- *The Elementary School Library Collection: A Guide to Books and Other Media*. Mary Gaver, general editor. New York: Bro-Dart Corp. Annual.
- *Junior High School Library Catalog*, 6th edition. New York: H.W. Wilson, 1990

### III. Annual Lists of "Best Books"

- Best Books for Young Adults/Children.

Compiled annually by the Young Adult Services Division/Association for Library Services to Children, American Library Association. Published in the April 15 issue of *Booklist*. Also Available as a pamphlet from ALA.

- Best Books of the Year for Young Adults/Children.

Compiled by *School Library Journal* and published in the December issue.

# **Selection Policy Appendix B**

## **The Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association**

Adopted June 18, 1948, by the American Library Association Council. Amended February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980. The history of this statement with interpretative documents appears in *Intellectual Freedom Manual* (4th edition, American Library Association, 1992). Reprinted with permission of the American Library Association and the Office for Intellectual Freedom (50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611) from *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, 4th edition, c1992.

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. Material 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 responsibilities 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.

# Selection Policy Appendix C

## Statement of Concern about School Library Resources

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_ Book \_\_\_\_ Audiovisual/Media \_\_\_\_ Magazine \_\_\_\_ Newspaper

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

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

2. What brought this title to your attention?

3. Have you read or viewed the title in its entirety?

4. Please comment on the resource as a whole as well as being specific on those matters which concern you.

Optional:

5. What resource(s) do you suggest to provide additional information on this topic?

# **Selection Policy Appendix D**

## **Instructions to Evaluating Committee**

1. Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to learn and to read and base your decision on the broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.
2. Study thoroughly all materials referred to you and read available reviews. The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and local holdings in other schools.
3. Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. These values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on materials as a whole.
4. Your report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, will be presented by the principal to the complainant at the conclusion of our discussion of the questioned material.