

LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARIES
& INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES**

MATERIALS SELECTION PROCEDURE

The following document is the result of the hard work and dedication of many people. Members of the Lexington Public Schools' Department of Libraries & Information Technologies were involved during the 2006-2007 school year.

Linda Corbett, Fiske School Library Media Specialist
Cathy Cote, Bowman School Library Media Specialist
Deeth Ellis, Lexington High School, School Library Media Specialist
Kristin Foti, Lexington High School, School Library Media Specialist
Karen Kishpaugh, Hastings School, School Library Media Specialist
Carolyn Kelly, Clarke Middle School, School Library Media Specialist
Jennifer Kuhn, Estabrook School, School Library Media Specialist
Harriet Wallen, Diamond Middle School, School Library Media Specialist
Caryn Werlin, Bridge School, School Library Media Specialist
Sarah Widhu, Harrington School. School Library Media Specialist

We also acknowledge the work of those former department members who were involved in the writing of the 2002 revision of the policy upon which this document is based:

Shelley Glantz, Coordinator
Margarite Bradley, Hastings School Library Media Specialist
Amy Hart, Technical Services Librarian
Susan Lum, Lexington High School Library Media Specialist
Arden Veley, Clarke Middle School Library Media Specialist

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VISION STATEMENT

The Lexington Public Schools Libraries are committed to support and enhance the Lexington Public Schools' core values: academic excellence; respectful and caring relationships; and a culture of reflection, conversation, collaboration and commitment to continuous improvement.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Lexington Public Schools' Department of Libraries and Information Technologies is to prepare our students to be informed, productive, and concerned citizens in an information-driven society. We encourage students to continue learning throughout their lives, to become ethical users of information and supporters of intellectual freedom, to develop an appreciation for literature and a love of reading, to appreciate diversity, and to develop a tolerance for differing points of view. We help them acquire the necessary critical thinking strategies and evaluative skills to do so.

Library Media Specialists, as teachers, information specialists, staff developers, curriculum consultants, facilities managers and learners:

- Select, organize and manage information resources in all formats and make access possible to all members of the learning community.
- Help all members of the learning community become effective and efficient searchers and users of information.
- Teach the skills necessary to locate and select a variety of information and ideas in all formats and from different points of view.
- Help users acquire an ability to judge the accuracy, currency, credibility and appropriateness of resources and then to recognize the patterns that emerge and use them to form hypotheses.
- Nurture an appreciation of literature, a love of reading and the recognition that the insights of literature provide a central base of cultural and practical knowledge.
- Encourage students to become life-long learners by exposing them to the richness of library resources and the strategies necessary for independent library use.
- Model and teach the ethics of using information and respect for intellectual property.
- Provide curriculum support through collection development and collaboration with teachers, both in the writing of curriculum and development of instructional strategies.

The preceding is based on four premises. First, library skills are more easily acquired and retained longer if they are relevant to students' daily lives, integrated with classroom assignments and cooperatively taught with classroom teachers. Second, critical thinking is intrinsic to the appreciation of literature and the research process, and the need to make evaluative judgments about library resources is an inherent part of their use. Third, libraries have expanded beyond the limits of four walls. Whether in a library,

classroom or at home, information can now be distributed to the point of need, making cooperative ventures with other libraries and the use of information networks essential to meeting the needs of today's learners. Finally, change is a constant and the library media program must be evaluated continually and revised to reflect new understandings about teaching, learning and emerging information technologies.

INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure that our library collections truly reflect the vision of the Lexington Public Schools and the mission of our department, we have revised our Materials Selection Procedure in line with stated goals of the School Library Long-Range Plan. This document outlines the strategies and procedures used in the building of these collections. It reflects the following goals of the long-range plan:

- To provide adequate and current resources to support teaching and learning
- To increase the currency of the collection
- To provide materials to support changes in the curriculum in response to the curriculum frameworks

In 2002 the Department of Libraries and Information Technologies undertook the complete revision of the Materials Selection Policy. Due to circumstances, that document was never formally presented to the School Committee for acceptance. The 2006 edition is based on that revision and was a multi-year process that involved the input of the entire Department of Libraries and Information Technologies. The document was reviewed by a diverse group of educators, librarians, administrators, and community members. As a living document this policy will be reviewed every five years. Revision of this document should take place on a ten-year cycle.

The library materials selection procedure is rooted in and supportive of the following documents:

1. *The Constitution of the United States*, especially the First Amendment
2. *The Students' Right to Read*, National Council of Teachers of English, 1982
3. *The Freedom to Read*, American Library Association, 2000
4. *The Freedom to View*, American Library Association, 1990
5. *Intellectual Freedom Documents*, American Library Association
6. *Library Bill of Rights*, American Library Association, 1996
7. *School Library Bill of Rights*, American Association of School Librarians

We also acknowledge our colleagues in the Newton Public Schools and their Library Materials and Adoption Policy, 2006.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The goal of Lexington Public School Libraries is to provide a well-balanced, diverse range of learning resources at varying levels of difficulty, to support the curriculum and the recreational reading needs of its users.

Collection Analysis

Collection Analysis is an organized process for systematically evaluating and assessing a library's collection. This process provides several kinds of important information, helps clarify a library's goals in context of its mission and budget, and is useful in setting long range goals.

The analysis has two components: the assessment, in which the collection is described in terms of content coverage and formats of materials; and the evaluation, in which the collection's appropriateness for the school population is judged. Analysis provides a tool for adapting the collection to the changing needs of the school.

The techniques for analysis are both collection-centered and client-centered. The collection-centered techniques may include counting holdings and checking collection development tools (as noted in selection resources) to determine the collection's scope and depth. The client-centered techniques may include user surveys and other information on how the libraries use the collection. Two kinds of data are collected:

Quantitative

- Number of titles
- Age and/or timeliness of materials
- Use (circulation statistics)
- Per capita measurements (items per student)

Qualitative Data

- Percent of standard titles or items (Best lists)
- Individual or group evaluation

Techniques for collecting data may include:

- Examination of shelf list data
- Direct examination of the collection
- List checking
- Evaluation by an outside expert (e.g. science coordinator)

Using the collected data, library staff will have a better understanding of the collection and a basis for collection development and improved communication with school administrators, patrons and other libraries.

Collection evaluation must be a part of any library planning effort and is essential in any systematic approach to establishing policy, rationalizing budget allocation, or discarding materials.

Selection

Responsibility for the selection of all library materials is delegated to the professionally trained certified Library Media Specialist through the Superintendent of Schools. The selection process involves open opportunity for consultation with administrators, faculty, curriculum leaders, and members of the school community.

Selection is based upon evaluation by the certified Library Media Specialist, guided by criteria and procedures as outlined in this document and the principles of *The Code of Ethics* of the American Library Association (see Appendix). The collection will be developed systematically ensuring a well-balanced coverage of subjects and a wide range of materials.

Materials are selected to serve the breadth of the curriculum, the needs and specific interests of students, and to address the wide scope of learning styles and multiple intelligences within a school. The Library Media Specialist strives to develop a comprehensive collection that supports the curriculum, provides a range of materials to meet the needs of all learners, is available in a variety of formats, and represents many different points of view. The library media program adheres to the *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Students' Freedom to Read*.

Criteria for Selection

In general, learning resources shall be selected for their strengths, rather than rejected for their weaknesses. When making selections, library media specialists may consider the following suggested criteria:

- Relevance to curriculum on the basis of curricular needs and the objectives of the instructional program
- Supports the goals and objectives of individual schools and specific courses
- Accuracy and objectivity, currency and validity as it relates to the content and purpose of the item
- Appropriateness for age, reading level, and learning style of target audience
- Variety of formats to accommodate all learning styles
- Cost and value in relation to physical quality, durability and projected use
- Reputation and significance of author, publisher, and /or producer
- Lasting significance
- Favorable reviews from standard selection sources

- Recommendations from colleagues
- Literary and artistic excellence based on reviews and awards
- Relevance to student interest
- High degree of potential user demand
- Contribution to the breadth and diversity of viewpoints
- Contribution to multicultural and pluralistic awareness

Internet sites which appear in the library catalog or on library homepages are selected using the above criteria and are intended to extend the learning experience of students and the instructional resources of classroom teachers beyond the print/non-print resources of the library media center. Web sites will be evaluated periodically using the above selection criteria. Students using the Internet at school must adhere to the *Lexington Public Schools Guidelines for Student Internet Use* as a condition for access.

Procedure

In selecting materials for the program, the professional Library Media Specialist shall evaluate the existing collection, assess curriculum needs, examine materials and consult reputable, professionally prepared selection aids. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible. Library Media professionals shall solicit recommendations from faculty, students, administrators, other library media specialists, and members of the community as appropriate. Such recommendations will undergo scrutiny of the above selection criteria.

Gift materials, sponsored materials, curriculum materials, and other donations, shall be judged by the criteria listed in the preceding section and shall be accepted or rejected on the basis of those criteria.

Selection is an ongoing process which includes the acquisition of up-to-date materials, the removal of materials no longer appropriate, and the replacement of lost and worn materials still of educational value.

Selection Resources

Library Media Specialists consult a variety of reviewing sources and tools for the selection of materials and collection development. For a list of suggested reviewing sources, see appendix.

Weeding

Weeding is the continuous process of discarding materials by the Library Media Specialist. Weeding allows Library Media Specialists to accurately assess a collection and to more closely align the selection process with an evolving curriculum, thus providing timely and accurate materials. The weeding process also allows professional Library Media Specialists to determine items in poor condition that support the curriculum and need to be replaced. Every library collection is limited by space and budgetary constraints. Weeding should be approached in a systematic way to ensure that the entire library collection is assessed regularly.

All items discarded from the library collection will be stamped for withdrawal and all identifying markings will be removed.

Statement on Access to Materials

This document supports *Massachusetts State Regulations 603CMR 26.00: Access To Equal Educational Opportunity, 26.05: Curricula*:

- (1) All public school systems shall, through their curricula, encourage respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.
- (2) Teachers shall review all instructional and educational materials for simplistic and demeaning generalizations, lacking intellectual merit, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. Appropriate activities, discussions and/or supplementary materials shall be used to provide balance and context for any such stereotypes depicted in such materials.

The Lexington Public Schools' Libraries also subscribe in principle to the American Library Association *Library Bill of Rights*. (see Appendix)

OBJECTIONS TO MATERIALS

Although libraries strive to create exemplary collections, occasionally objections to materials may be made. The procedure to express concern is outlined below. It provides for a hearing with appropriate action within the context of the principle of freedom of information, the students' right to access of materials, and the professional responsibility and integrity of the Library Media Specialist while upholding the tenets of this document. No materials shall be removed from the library before the formal process of review is completed.

Procedures

1. Any concerns regarding library materials shall be directed to the Library Media Specialist, whether by telephone, letter, or personal conversation.
2. The Library Media Specialist will notify the building principal and the head of the Department of Libraries and Information Technologies of the complaint.
3. The Library Media Specialist shall conduct an informal discussion with the complainant which may include the philosophy and goals of the Lexington Public Schools as well as the materials selection criteria and process. If this discussion results in the resolution of the problem, a letter to that effect will be written to the principal and head of the department and signed by the Library Media Specialist.
4. If the issue is not resolved informally, the complainant shall be supplied with a packet of materials consisting of:
 - Letter of acknowledgement from the Library Media Specialist
 - The Lexington Public Schools Materials Selection Procedure
 - *Statement of Concern about Library Resources*
5. The *Statement of Concern about Library Resources* shall be completed and returned before further consideration of the matter. The *Statement of Concern about Resources* must be received by the Library Media Specialist within two weeks of the date indicated on the letter of acknowledgement or the matter shall be considered closed.
6. Upon receipt of the completed form by the designated date, the following process will then be implemented:
 - No questioned materials shall be removed from the school library shelf pending the objection process, though access to questioned materials may be denied to a child (or children) if their parent or guardian is the complainant and so requests.

- The head of the Department of Libraries and Information Technologies shall inform the Superintendent of Schools of the objection.
- The head of the Department of Libraries and Information Technologies will chair and convene a Committee to Consider which will meet within two weeks of receipt of the completed *Statement of Concern about Library Resources* form.

The Committee to Consider shall consist of:

Director of Elementary or Secondary Education
 Head of the Department of Libraries and Information Technologies
 Deputy Superintendent
 Principal or Assistant Principal from the school involved
 Library Media Specialist from the school involved
 Library Media Specialist at-large
 One representative from the parent association of the school involved
 One teacher from the school involved
 One teacher at-large

Should there be a conflict of interest, other representatives will be appointed by the Committee Chair.

6. The process of the Committee to Consider shall include the following steps:

- Review submitted *Statement of Concern About Library Resources* from the complainant, written statement of the Library Media Specialist from the school involved in defense of the material, and *Guidelines for the Committee to Consider*
- Read, view, or listen to the challenged material in its entirety.
- Review the Lexington Public Schools Library Media Selection Procedure.
- Check general acceptance of the materials through the reading of critical reviews and consulting of recommended lists and collection development tools.
- Determine the extent to which the material adheres to the selection procedure.
- Weigh the merits of the challenged material against its faults. Form opinions based on the material as a whole, and not on passages isolated from context.

7. The Committee to Consider shall prepare a formal written report to be presented to the Superintendent of Schools. In its report, the committee shall explain the selection philosophy, note the specific criteria used for selection of the material under reconsideration, summarize its deliberations, and make its recommendation based upon committee consensus.
8. The Superintendent shall review and adopt the findings of the Committee to Consider in the absence of clear and convincing proof that the Committee's findings were inappropriate or arbitrary. The Superintendent's adoption of the Committee's findings shall be administratively final, binding, and conclusive.
9. Within two weeks of the Superintendent's acceptance of the committee's recommendation, the head of the Department of Libraries and Information Technologies shall notify the complainant of the decision in writing.

A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

Statement on Copyright

The Lexington Public School Libraries uphold the federal guidelines which prohibit the duplication of copyrighted materials in all formats without authorization of the holder of the copyright, except for certain exempt purposes (Title 17, United States Code, Chapter 1, Section 107 and 108).

Each school library has a copy of *Copyright for Schools: A Practical Guide, Fourth Edition* (Linworth Publishing) for reference. A summation of the guidelines is included with this document.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: **SAMPLE LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO
COMPLAINANT**

Date: _____

Dear _____:

We appreciate your concern regarding the use of

(Title)

by (Author's or Producer's Name)

at the _____
(School Name) in the Lexington Public Schools.

We have developed procedures for selecting materials, but realize that not everyone will agree with every selection made. To help you understand the selection process, we are sending a copy of the *Lexington Public Schools Library Materials Selection Procedures* that includes our philosophy, goals, and right to read statements. It is our hope that upon review of our selection guidelines and criteria, you will view the objected to material in a more favorable light.

Also enclosed are the established procedures for handling objections, and a *Statement of Concern About Library Resources*. If you are still concerned after having reviewed this material, please complete the *Statement of Concern About Library Resources* form and return it to _____ (name of Library Media Specialist). You may be assured of prompt attention to your request.

The form must be returned within two weeks from the date of this letter, no later than _____ (Date due here). If I have not heard from you within the specified time period, I will assume you no longer wish to file a formal complaint.

Thank you for your interest in the Lexington Public Schools.

Sincerely,
(Name of Library Media Specialist)
Library Media Specialist

APPENDIX B: STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT LIBRARY RESOURCES

Please return this form to the Library Media Specialist by _____.
(Due date)

Date _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address:

(Street)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

Complainant represents:

_____ himself/herself

_____ organization (if yes, please name) _____

_____ other group (if yes, please identify) _____

Name of school owning challenged material: _____

Do you have a child in this school? _____ (no) _____ (yes) _____ (grade level)

Title of item under consideration: _____

Author/Producer: _____

Resource type: __ Book __ Magazine __ Newspaper __ Audiovisual __ Other

If other, please
specify: _____

1. What brought this resource to your
attention? _____

2. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire item? ____ (yes) ____ (no)

3. To what in the item do you object? Please be specific, and cite pages, paragraphs,
frames, etc.

Please attach a separate sheet if necessary

4. Do you have a comment on the item as a whole? What do you feel is the value and purpose of this item?

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

6. For what age or grade level would you recommend this resource?

*Please attach copies of any reviews of this work that you have read.

APPENDIX C: GUIDELINES FOR THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER

All proceedings are outlined in the Objection to Materials section of the *Lexington Public Schools' Library Media Materials Selection Procedure*.

- The First Amendment guarantees the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. Base your decision on these broad principles rather than on a defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.
- Study thoroughly all materials provided to you by the committee chair. These will include all available reviews from standard evaluation tools, as well as holdings of other comparable local school libraries.
- Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighted against each other and opinions based on the material as a whole.

The goal is to help the complainant to recognize the intrinsic value of the item, as learning resources are initially selected for their strengths, rather than rejected for their weaknesses.

Your report, representing both majority and minority opinions, will be presented to the Superintendent of Schools for the committee's final review and action. The complainant will be notified of their decision by a letter from the Head of the Department of Library and Information Technologies.

Appendix D: Suggested Review Sources

1. Current Reviewing Media (sources of reviews for print and non-print materials) such as:

- a. *Booklist*
- b. *Booklinks*
- c. *Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books*
- d. *Classroom Connect*
- e. *Computers in Libraries*
- f. *Horn Book*
- g. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*
- h. *Kirkus*
- i. *Kliatt*
- j. *Learning and Leading with Technology*
- k. *Library Journal*
- l. *Library Media Connection*
- m. *Media and Methods*
- n. *Multicultural Review*
- o. *Multimedia Schools*
- p. *New York Times Book Review*
- q. *Publisher's Weekly*
- r. *School Library Journal*
- s. *Science Books and Films*
- t. *Teacher Librarian*
- u. *Technology and Learning*
- v. *VOYA*
- w. *Wilson Library Bulletin*

2. Subject specific professional periodicals including but not limited or restricted to:

- a. *English Journal*
- b. *Instructor*
- c. *Language Arts*
- d. *Reading Teacher*
- e. *Science and Children*
- f. *Social Education*
- g. *Social Studies and the young Learner*
- h. *Science Scope*
- i. *Science Teacher*
- j. *Teaching K-8*
- k. *Teaching Children Mathematics*
- l. *Teaching Tolerance*

2. Selected Bibliographies such as:

- ALA: *Notable Books for Children*
Notable Children's Films and Videos

Notable Children's Websites
Best Books for Young Adults
Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers
Outstanding Books for the College Bound
National Council for Social Studies: *Notable Social Studies Trade Books*
National Science Teachers Association: *Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students*
International Reading Association: *Children's Choice; Teacher's Choice*
Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books: *Blue Ribbons*
American Association for the Advancement of Science: *Best Children's Science; Best Science Books for Young Adults*
Award Winners including Newbery, Caldecott, Coretta Scott King, Michael Printz, National Book Award, Mildred L. Batchelder Award, Boston Globe, Horn Book Awards, and others

3. Collection Development Tools such as:

Adventuring With Books: a booklist for PreK-Grade 6 (NCTE)
A-Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books
Best Books for Children: Preschool Through Grade 6
Best Books for Young Adult Readers Grades 7-12
Best Videos for Children and Young Adults
Bookfinder
Elementary School Library Collection
Middle and Junior High School library Catalog
Recommended Reference Books for Small and Medium Size Libraries and Media Centers
Reference Books for Young Readers
Senior High School Library Catalog
Subject Index to Books for Intermediate Grades
Subject Index to Books for Primary Grades
Your Reading: a Booklist for Junior High and Middle School

First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution

CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF; OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS; OR THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE PEACEABLY TO ASSEMBLE, AND TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

The Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on December 15, 1791

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.

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

The 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:

1. *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.

2. *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.

3. *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.

4. *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.

5. *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.

6. *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.

7. *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.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression](#)
[The Association of American University Presses, Inc.](#)
[The Children's Book Council](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)
[The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression](#)

Freedom to View Statement

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the [First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States](#). In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council

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Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

- I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
- IV. We recognize and respect intellectual property rights.
- V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
- VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
- VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
- VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

Adopted June 28, 1995, by the ALA Council

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.

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

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Diversity in Collection Development: **An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Throughout history, the focus of censorship has fluctuated from generation to generation. Books and other materials have not been selected or have been removed from library collections for many reasons, among which are prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, sexual forms of expression, and other potentially controversial topics.

Some examples of censorship may include removing or not selecting materials because they are considered by some as racist or sexist; not purchasing conservative religious materials; not selecting materials about or by minorities because it is thought these groups or interests are not represented in a community; or not providing information on or materials from non-mainstream political entities.

Librarians may seek to increase user awareness of materials on various social concerns by many means, including, but not limited to, issuing bibliographies and presenting exhibits and programs. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be inclusive, not exclusive, in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan. Access to all materials legally obtainable should be assured to the user, and policies should not unjustly exclude materials even if they are offensive to the librarian or the user. Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article II of the [Library Bill of Rights](#): "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." A balanced collection reflects a diversity of materials, not an equality of numbers. Collection development responsibilities include selecting materials in the languages in common use in the community the library serves. Collection development and the selection of materials should be done according to professional standards and established selection and review procedures.

There are many complex facets to any issue, and variations of context in which issues may be expressed, discussed, or interpreted. Librarians have a professional responsibility to be fair, just, and equitable and to give all library users equal protection in guarding against violation of the library patron's right to read, view, or listen to materials and resources protected by the [First Amendment](#), no matter what the viewpoint of the author, creator, or selector. Librarians have an obligation to protect library collections from removal of materials based on personal bias or prejudice, and to select and support the access to materials on all subjects that meet, as closely as possible, the needs, interests, and abilities of all persons in the community the library serves. This includes materials that reflect political, economic, religious, social, minority, and sexual issues.

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Toleration is meaningless without tolerance for what some may consider detestable. Librarians cannot justly permit their own preferences to limit their degree of tolerance in collection development, because freedom is indivisible.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990

Evaluating Library Collections: **An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

The continuous review of library materials is necessary as a means of maintaining an active library collection of current interest to users. In the process, materials may be added and physically deteriorated or obsolete materials may be replaced or removed in accordance with the collection maintenance policy of a given library and the needs of the community it serves. Continued evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of all libraries and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or disapproved of by segments of the community. Such abuse of the evaluation function violates the principles of intellectual freedom and is in opposition to the Preamble and Articles I and II of the [Library Bill of Rights](#), which state:

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.

The American Library Association opposes such "silent censorship" and strongly urges that libraries adopt guidelines setting forth the positive purposes and principles of evaluation of materials in library collections.

Adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981.

Challenged Materials:
An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined materials selection policy in written form that reflects the [Library Bill of Rights](#), and that is approved by the appropriate governing authority.

Challenged materials that meet the criteria for selection in the materials selection policy of the library should not be removed under any legal or extra-legal pressure. The *Library Bill of Rights* states in Article I that "Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation," and in Article II, that "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution of the United States, but constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line. The Constitution requires a procedure designed to focus searchingly on challenged expression before it can be suppressed. An adversary hearing is a part of this procedure.

Therefore, any attempt, be it legal or extra-legal, to regulate or suppress materials in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged.

Adopted June 25, 1971, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990.

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