

## PORT EDWARDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Board of Education Policy

#### SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL/LIBRARY MATERIALS

##### I. OBJECTIVES OF SELECTION

The school library is an integral part of the school district with the primary objective of implementing and enriching the educational program of the school.

The library, in accordance with the STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL MEDIA PROGRAMS, shall provide:

- materials that enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of students served,
- materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards,
- materials that present a background of different points of view and materials on opposing sides of controversial issues which will enable students to make intelligent judgments,
- materials that give increased dimensions to learning through access to a variety of media,
- materials that provide for the student's personal interests and recreational reading,
- materials which foster respect for minority and ethnic groups and realistically represent our pluralistic society,
- materials that foster respect for the roles open to both men and women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and for the diversity of families in the 21<sup>st</sup> century,
- materials which help students gain an awareness and understanding of the many important contributions made to our civilization by ethnic groups.

*The school district adheres to the beliefs set forth in THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS, ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS American Library Association 1986, 1990, and THE FREEDOM TO READ American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers, 1953, 1972, and 1991.*

##### II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS

The Port Edwards Board of Education is responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the schools.

The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained personnel employed by the school.

Selection of library materials involves many people; principals, teachers, students and librarians. The responsibility for COORDINATING the selection of such materials and making the recommendation for purchase rests with the librarian.

*The School District of Port Edwards shall not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, political affiliation, sex or sexual orientation, age, national origin, handicap, pregnancy, marital or parental status, ancestry, color, creed, physical, mental, emotional or learning disability, arrest or conviction record, membership in the National Guard, state defense force or any other reserve component of the military forces of the United States or Wisconsin, or any other reason prohibited by state or federal law. Discrimination complaints shall be handled in accordance with established procedures.*

LEGAL REFERENCES:     Sections 118.12 Wisconsin Statutes  
                                   118.13  
                                   120.13(5)  
                                   121.02(1)(h)  
                                   PI 9.03(1) of the Wisconsin Administrative Code

CROSS REFERENCES:    411 – Rule, Student Discrimination Complaint Procedures  
                                   361.1 – Rule, Guidelines for Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional/Library Materials  
                                   361.1 – Exhibit (1), Request for Reconsideration of Instructional/Library Materials  
                                   361.1 – Exhibit (2), Library Bill of Rights/Interpretation

Adopted:                April 1975

Reviewed:

Revised:                09/12/88, 05/18/92, 07/17/01, 08/02/04

## Guidelines for Selection and Reconsideration of Instructional/Library Materials

### A. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS:

Needs of the individual school based on knowledge of the curriculum and of the existing collection are given first consideration.

Materials for purchase are considered on the basis of:

- overall purpose
- timeliness or permanence
- importance of subject matter
- quality of the writing/production
- readability and popular appeal
- authoritativeness
- reputation of the publisher/producer
- significance of the author/artist/composer/producer, etc.
- format and price
- requests from faculty and students.

### B. PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION

In selecting materials for purchase, the librarian evaluates the existing collection and consults reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection tools.

These tools would include some of the following or their like: CHILDRENS CATALOG, JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY CATALOG, SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY CATALOG, REVIEWS IN SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL, Cooperative Children's Book Center CHOICES, HORN BOOK, ALA (American Library Association) Outstanding Books lists, etc. He/she would also consult school personnel in their teaching field and at times ask them to preview materials for purchase.

In specific areas the librarian follows these procedures:

- gift materials be judged by basic selection standards and be accepted or rejected by these standards
- packages of materials be evaluated for acquisition in the same manner as individual titles
- books at elementary level be purchased with library editions or better whenever possible (excluding paperbacks)
- worn or missing standard items be replaced periodically
- out-of-date or no longer useful materials be withdrawn from the collection. (see the library procedure manual)

### C. CHALLENGED MATERIALS

Objection to a selection may be made by a student, parent, guardian, resident, or employee of the district. The school official or staff member receiving a complaint will try to resolve the issue informally. The school official or staff member should keep a record of the exchange and notify the principal the same day.

All complaints must follow the procedure below:

1. Invite the complainant to file his/her objections in writing using the school form REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION of material. The completed form is submitted to the principal.
2. The material in question shall not be restricted or removed because of a complaint; however a parent or guardian may ask it be restricted from his/her child.
3. Upon receipt of the above signed complaint, the material in question is given to a review committee which will be in place by the start of each school year and will be chosen by the Superintendent with input from the District Librarian. The Handbook from the DPI, *Dealing with Selection and Censorship*, will be given to committee members.

The make-up of the committee shall be:

- (2) adult members from the community
- (3) faculty members, one from elementary, one from middle school, one from high school
- (1) student (with permission of parent) who is on Student Council and is active only during a challenge
- (1) school board member
- The Media Specialist
- The principal of the building involved in the challenge (chair)

4. The committee will:
  - a) Read and examine materials referred to it.

- b) Consult reviews of the material published by professional reviewing services.
  - c) Weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages pulled out of context.
  - d) Invite the complainant to make an oral presentation of 15 minutes or less to the review committee if he/she wishes.
  - e) Within 30 days receipt of the complaint, or as soon thereafter as possible, the review committee will meet to discuss the material and to vote. A majority vote decides. The committee's report, decision, vote totals and an optional minority report is submitted to the District Administrator. The decision only is forwarded to the complainant.
5. Following the decision by the Review Committee, the complainant may appeal the decision to the School Board within ten days.
  6. To assure that any press coverage is accurate, the building principal will be the spokesperson.
  7. The material is reconsidered only for the specific building collection in question, not for all buildings in the district.
  8. Upon completion of a reconsideration process, the same title will not be reconsidered for five years. If different titles in the same subject/theme are challenged, after five challenges in five years to titles from the same topic the district will refuse further reconsideration requests.
  9. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professional staff involved in the original selection or use of the material.

#### VI. REGULAR MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY REVIEW

The district Media Specialist will select a committee to review the Policy for Selection of Instructional/Library Materials for possible revision every five years. The committee will consist of:

- Media Specialist
- one high school teacher
- one junior high teacher
- one elementary teacher
- one principal
- one parent
- one board member

The committee will submit a written recommendation regarding any revision of the policy to the school board.

PORT EDWARDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL/LIBRARY MATERIAL

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Type of material \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Request initiated by \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant represents:

Himself/Herself       Organization/Group (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Did you read the entire book/view the entire audio-visual?
- 2. To what in the book/audio-visual do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages/frames)
- 3. What do you believe is the theme of this book/audio-visual?
- 4. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book/viewing this audio-visual?
- 5. Is there anything good about this book/audio-visual?

6. For what age group would you recommend this book/audio-visual?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Are you aware of the judgment of this book/audio-visual by literary critics?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What would you like your library to do with or about this book/audio-visual?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. In its place, what book/audio-visual of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. Do you wish to make a 15-minute oral presentation before the review committee?  
  
    \_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
  
    \_\_\_\_\_ No

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Signature of Complainant

Date

*Return the completed form to the school principal*

## APPENDIX

### 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- 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; amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, 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 shape 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 professionals 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 professionals 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 professionals cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources appropriate to the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources which support curriculum and are consistent with the philosophy, goals, and objectives of the school district. Resources in school library media collections represent diverse points of view and current as well as historical issues.

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 which 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 professionals resist efforts by individuals to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, or hear.

Major barriers between students and resources include: 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 the 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 professionals implement district policies and procedures in the school.

*Adopted July 2, 1986; amended January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.*

## The Freedom to Read

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 books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, 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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. 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.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

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 stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which 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 towards 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 which are unorthodox or unpopular with 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 which 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 contained in the books 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 books 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 determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.**

A book should be judged as a book. 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 which 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 literature 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 taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which 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 with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.**

The idea of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. 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.**

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.

**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 expended on the trivial; it is frustrated 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 their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens 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 books. We do so because we believe that they are good, 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.

*The above is a Joint Statement by the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers. 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; revised January 28, 1972, and January 16, 1991, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.*