

Pittsfield School District

LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

MISSION AND FUNCTION STATEMENT

The mission of the Pittsfield School Library Media Center is to provide free access to information and services to all students and staff to ensure that intellectual freedom and growth is encouraged. Materials for school classrooms and school libraries should be appropriate for students.

The collection will reflect the differing needs of students and staff and shall support the curriculum while also offering recreational reading material in a range of formats and levels, both in print and non-print. The media centers shall be logically organized so they are easily accessed by students and staff.

The media programs are dedicated to ensuring that the students and staff have opportunities to be users of information. The goal of the library media centers is to develop citizens who are information literate.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM

The school library media programs play a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. They serve as points of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed. Although the educational level and programs of the schools necessarily shape the resources and services of a school library media program, the principles of the First Amendment and the Library Bill of Rights apply equally to all libraries, including school library media programs. Under these principles, all students have equitable access to library facilities, resources, and instructional 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. Intellectual freedom is fostered by educating students in the use of critical thinking skills to empower them to pursue free inquiry responsibility and independently.

School library media specialists cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources that meet the needs as well as 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. The school library media program provides resources in other languages to

accommodate the needs of students for whom English is a second language.

Members of the school community involved in the collections 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.

Certain restrictions between students and resources include by are not limited to imposing age, grade-level, or reading level restrictions on the use of resources; limiting the use of interlibrary loan and access to electronic information; charging fees for information in certain 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.

It is the responsibility of the board to adopt policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of resources. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised.

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

Materials are selected by the school district's representatives to implement, enrich, and support the educational program of the schools. Material must serve both the breadth and depth of the curriculum as well as the needs and interests of individual students. The district is obligated to provide for a wide range of abilities and to respect the diversity of many differing points of view. To this end, principles must be placed above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality and appropriateness.

The main objective of the selection procedure is to provide students with a wide range of educational materials on all levels of difficulty and in a variety of formats, with diversity of appeal, allowing for the presentation of many different points of view.

The objective of the media center is to make available to faculty and students a collection of materials that will enrich and support the curriculum and meet the needs of the students and faculty served. To ensure parental engagement, the district shall make the selection process of library materials readily available for parental review, with a list of all library materials posted on-line on the district's website, and the content of all materials available for direct review.

In recognizing that parents hold an essential role in the education of their children and have the right to guide what their children read, each library shall maintain a printed list of materials onsite and on the school library website that shows what has been selected as well as what is slated for acquisition.

While the legal responsibility for the purchase of materials is vested in the school board, the procedure for the selection of library materials is delegated to the Library Media Specialists. In order to maintain open lines of communication with all groups affected by

the services of the school library/media centers , it is considered essential that the selection and acquisition of all print and non-print library materials reflect the thought and consideration of the administration, faculty, education specialists, and student body.

**DEALING WITH CHALLENGES TO BOOKS AND OTHER LIBRARY MEDIA
MATERIALS**

Objections will occasionally occur to a selection made for the school library media center. Any SAU #51 student, parent or guardian, teacher or specialist, administrator, or community member has the right to express concerns and to challenge library materials with an expectation to have the objection taken seriously. When library materials are reconsidered, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view are defended rather than specific materials. A questioned item will be considered in its entirety, not judged solely on portions taken out of context. Questioned items will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process.

Policy IJL-R will provide procedures for handling informal complaints as well as school library procedures for handling formal complaints, including sample letters to persons requesting reconsideration of materials.

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