

# Southern Cayuga Central School District Library

## Collection Development Guidelines

### I. Introduction

#### A. Vision/Mission

*The library fosters an equitable and culturally responsive community of learning and literacy that leads to high academic achievement, independent reading and learning, empowered student voices, and collaboration throughout the school.*

#### B. Guideline Objectives/Goals (From SCCS BOE Policy # 8320)

1. To provide materials and programming that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served.
2. To provide materials and programming that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.
3. To provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical reading and thinking.
5. To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contribution to our American heritage.
6. To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

#### C. Support for Intellectual Freedom

The school libraries of this district are guided by the principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretative statements, including "Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program" and The Students' Right to Read statement of the National Council of Teachers of English. See Appendix (in this policy) for the Library Bill of Rights, "Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program," and The Students' Right to Read statement.

### II. Acquisition/Selection Guidelines

#### A. Selection Objectives

1. To provide faculty and students with materials that enrich and support the curriculum and meet the academic and aesthetic needs of the students and faculty served
2. 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
3. To select materials that present various sides of controversial issues, giving students an opportunity to develop analytical skills resulting in informed decisions
4. To select materials in all formats, including up-to-date, high quality, varied literature to develop and strengthen a love of reading

## B. Responsibility for the Selection of Library Materials

Broad and varied collections will be developed systematically by the librarian and the audiovisual specialist, based on recommendations of the professional staff and suggestions of students and parents/guardians and/or persons in parental relation. Final approval will be made by the building principal.

## C. Selection Criteria

1. Needs of the individual school are based on knowledge of:
  - a) Requests of faculty and students
  - b) Curriculum
  - c) Students needs
  - d) Student interests
  - e) Existing collection
  - f) Parent needs
2. Criteria
  - a) **Scope-** Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests and learning. Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest
  - b) **Quality-** Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format
  - c) **Current Availability-** Balance cost with need
  - d) **Reliability-** Incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources
  - e) **Authority-** Earn favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
  - f) **Inclusion-** Represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues
  - g) **Diversity-** Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures
  - h) **Durability-** Demonstrate physical format, appearance, and durability suitable to their intended use

## D. Selection Procedure

1. In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible.
2. Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, students, district personnel, and community members, as appropriate.
3. Selection is an ongoing process that should include removing materials that are no longer used or needed, adding materials, and replacing lost and worn materials that still have educational value.

## E. Selection of Materials on Controversial Topics

The school board subscribes to the principles expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. It is the responsibility of the school district to provide a wide range of materials on different levels of difficulty and representing different points of view. School library professional staff will provide materials on opposing viewpoints on controversial issues to enable students to develop necessary critical thinking skills to be discerning users of information and productive members of society.

## F. Special Areas

Gifts and donations to the school library are accepted with the understanding that the decision for use and disposition of the materials and/or funds will be determined using the same selection criteria as purchased materials. All materials should support the curriculum and needs of library users. Gifts and donations, like purchased resources, will be removed from the collection at the end of their useful life.

## III. Deselection/ Weeding

**Periodically** the **school librarian** will conduct an inventory of the school library collection and equipment. The inventory can be used to determine losses and remove damaged or worn materials which can then be considered for replacement. The inventory can also be used to deselect and remove materials that are no longer relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students. Additionally, school librarians should develop a collection maintenance plan that includes systematic inspection of materials that would result in weeding outdated, damaged, or irrelevant materials from the collection.

## IV. Reconsideration

### A. Statement of Policy

1. Despite the careful selection of library resources and the qualification of those involved in the selection process, objections to library resources that are deemed offensive or inappropriate may occur. Any resident, employee, or student of the school district may express an informal concern or formal request for reconsideration of a library resource.

### B. Guiding Principles

1. Libraries have diverse materials reflecting differing points of view, and a library's mission is to provide access to information to all users.
2. All library users have a First Amendment right to read, view, and listen to library resources.
3. The Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association can be used as guiding documents.
4. Any person has the right to express concerns about library resources and expect to have the objection taken seriously.
5. When library resources are reconsidered, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view are defended rather than specific materials.
6. A questioned item will be considered in its entirety, not judged solely on portions taken out of context.
7. Parents or guardians have the right to guide the reading, viewing, and listening of their children but must give the same right to other parents/guardians.
8. Questioned items will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process.
9. *The reconsideration process should be completed in its entirety and not subverted or ended prematurely, leaving the library open to legal challenge.*

### C. Informal Complaints

1. Persons with a complaint about library print or digital resources, or library programming should state their concerns to the school librarian or principal. The librarian or principal will listen attentively to the concerns and attempt to resolve the issue informally. As part of the discussion, the school employee will explain the library's selection policy, selection criteria, diversity of the collection with resources from many points of view, and the selection process. Additionally, each parent/guardian has the right to determine the appropriateness of library resources for their children and should accord the same right to other families.
2. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the librarian or principal will explain the formal reconsideration process and provide the individual with a copy of the

school district's library selection policy with reconsideration procedures and a request for reconsideration of library resources form. If there is concern about multiple items, a separate form must be completed for each item. All complaints to staff members shall be reported to the building principal, whether received by telephone, letter, or in personal conversation. No library resources should be removed or restricted from use as a result of the informal complaint.

3. If the completed and signed formal request for reconsideration form has not been received by the principal within two weeks, the matter shall be considered closed.

#### D. Request for Formal Reconsideration

1. The following procedures should be followed if, after discussing the questioned resource, no resolution is made.
  - a) The complainant should be referred to the principal.
    - (1) **ONLY** residents of the school district submit formal requests for reconsideration.
  - b) A concerned citizen who is dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be offered a **packet of materials which includes the library's mission statement, selection policy, request for reconsideration of instructional resources form** which asks the complainant to specifically cite the content they deem objectionable, and include title, author, and page number **and the Library Bill of Rights**.
  - c) The complainant is required to complete and submit the reconsideration form to the principal within ten business days.
  - d) If a completed reconsideration form is not submitted within ten business days, the matter is considered closed.
  - e) Upon receipt of the form, the matter will be referred to the Building Principal and the Instructional Material Review Committee. The committee will include the librarian, principal, and two teachers who will review the challenged material and make recommendations to the Superintendent concerning the disposition of the complaint.
  - f) **The work in question will remain on library shelves and in circulation until a formal decision is made.**
2. If the complaint should remain unresolved, the complainant may appeal to the Board of Education, whose decision will be final.
3. The school librarian will secure copies of the resource for the committee to review.
  - a) **The school librarian will provide the reviewing committee with a short formal Intellectual Freedom training that explains a packet of materials, which includes the library's mission statement, selection policy, the Library Bill of Rights, the completed reconsideration form, reviews of the resource being reconsidered, and a list of awards or honors, if any. This packet should be created with assistance from the state department of public instruction and the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom.**
  - b) The Instructional Material Review Committee (which should include the school librarian) should schedule a formal reconsideration meeting within 10 school days after the principal receives the written request for reconsideration. The principal should notify the superintendent and the school library department director as to this schedule.

#### 4. Committee Procedures

- a) At the initial meeting, the principal and committee will review reconsideration committee guidelines and procedures. A school administrator should fully participate in the reconsideration process.
- b) A member of the committee should keep minutes.
- c) All committee members should fully review the resource (read or view the entire work) before voting.
- d) The committee reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision-making process.
- e) The complainant may make an initial verbal presentation about the resource under reconsideration or may choose to share the written form. The complainant is asked to provide sources for quotes used during this presentation.
- f) The complainant may not participate in or observe the committee's deliberations unless invited to do so by the committee. The committee chair may choose to give committee members time to ask questions.
- g) During the initial or subsequent meetings, the committee will make its decision determined by the simple majority to retain, move the resources to a different level, or remove the resource. This will be a secret ballot vote.
- h) The committee's written decision (including a minority report if needed) shall be presented to the complainant, the superintendent of schools, and the school library media specialist within five school days after the decision is made.
- i) If the complaint should remain unresolved, the complainant may appeal to the Board of Education, whose decision will be final.

5. Procedure for appeal to the BOE

- a) An appeal of the decision made by the District-Level Reconsideration Committee must be made in writing to the superintendent within 10 days of the system-level committee decision.
- b) A decision on the complaint will be made at the next regular meeting or special meeting within 30 days of the written request to the superintendent.
- c) The board reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision making.
- d) The chairperson for the District-Level Reconsideration Committee will present the committee's decision to the board.
- e) The complainant or designee will present the petitioner's position.
- f) The board decision will be final, and the superintendent will implement the decision.
- g) Decisions on reconsidered materials will stand for five years before new requests for reconsideration of those items will be entertained.

**6. Reconsideration of the item for substantially similar concerns will not be entertained for a period of five years after a decision has been made.**