



UPDATE/CORRECTION made on Page 3

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The School Board recognizes the importance of school libraries play in supplementing and enhancing the District's educational programs offered to its students. The School Board understands the contents of the District's school libraries should reflect the diversity of students' reading interests and support its overall educational mission, while at the same time recognizing that school libraries are not the sole and exclusive venues for school-aged children to gain access to reading materials.

The policy intends to delineate how the contents of school library collections are determined, maintained, and periodically reviewed, as well as explain parental/guardian rights concerning the school libraries.

Purpose

The School Board adopts this policy for the following purposes:

1. To make clear the primary purpose of our school libraries is to promote literacy and critical thinking of its students by providing them access to an array of library materials intended to supplement the learning activities occurring in our classrooms and promote recreational reading interests.
2. To establish reasonable criteria and systems for the selection of high-quality library materials for inclusion in our school libraries by means of purchase or the acceptance of donations.
3. To establish reasonable, non-content-based criteria for the removal and discarding of library materials to ensure school library collections remain viable, up-to-date and of interest to the students they serve.
4. To empower each parent and guardian to decide which library materials their children may access in the school library system.
5. To allow for a meaningful review of library materials based upon legitimate parent/guardian concerns without undermining the role of the school library to encourage freedom of inquiry and each student's right to read.

Definitions

“Challenge” - a written submission seeking the removal of specific library material from a school library made in compliance with this policy.

“Excessive or gratuitous profanity” - the pervasive use of profane, vulgar or other language that offends good taste or propriety contained within material, such that the material taken as a whole does not offer serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for the intended student audience.

“Excessive or gratuitous sexuality” - the description or depiction of human genitals in a sexual manner or the fondling or touching of human genitals, buttocks or breasts in a sexual manner contained within material, such that the material when taken as whole appeals to prurient interests in sex and does not offer serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for the intended student audience.

“Excessive or gratuitous graphic violence”- the pervasive description or depiction of violence in a vivid, brutal or realistic manner contained within material, such that the material, when taken as whole, does not offer serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value for the intended student audience.

“Library material” or “material” - means an audio recording, book, periodical, reference material, subscription database or other such material either made available for circulation to students within the school library or material being considered for such purposes. This term does not apply to a textbook and/or other instructional materials used within the school curriculum which are covered by Policy 108 (Textbooks).

“Opt-out” - the voluntary decision made by a parent or guardian for his/her own child to restrict the student’s access to certain library material contained within the school library.

“Parent or guardian” - an adult who has physical and legal custody of a school-aged child attending one of the District’s schools.

“School library” - a library within a District school where all students and school staff of that school have access to library materials.

“Selection” - the systematic selection of materials, through either the purchase or the acceptance of a donation, for inclusion in a school library in compliance with the selection criteria contained in this policy.

“Weeding” - the systematic removal and disposal of library materials from a school library based on the weeding criteria contained in this policy.

Library Selection Criteria

All purchased or donated library materials selected for inclusion in school libraries shall satisfy the following criteria:

1. Enrich and support the curriculum consistent with the general educational goals of the District, and the objectives of individual schools and specific courses.
2. Are appropriate for the subject area and for the age, ability level, learning styles, interests and educational development of students served by the school library.
3. Present various sides of controversial issues so that students have an opportunity to develop, under the appropriate guidance of school staff, skills in critical analysis and in making informed judgments in their daily lives.
4. Promote literacy.
5. Meet high standards in the presentation, format, readability, content, accuracy, artistic or literary quality and educational significance.
6. Do not contain excessive or gratuitous sexuality, excessive or gratuitous profanity, or excessive or gratuitous graphic violence.
7. Are not altered, edited, or formatted in any manner inconsistent with the author’s intent.

All the above selection criteria shall be given appropriate weight when assessing the suitability of library materials for inclusion within a school library. Administrative regulations may be developed to further assist how the selection criteria shall be applied at different school libraries (elementary, middle and high schools) when selecting library materials for those student populations.

The School Board tasks the Library Material Review Committee (“Committee”) with the responsibility to review and select purchased or donated library materials for inclusion in the school libraries in compliance with this policy. The Committee shall be comprised of representatives from the following groups: school librarians, District administrators, parents and community members, students, teachers and School Board members. Each non-student Committee member shall vote on each library material being reviewed: “yes” to include the material in the library or “no” not to include the material in the library; provided, however, a school librarian serving on the Committee whose is recommending specific library material shall abstain from voting on it. A two-thirds vote of the Committee shall constitute a final decision regarding whether proposed library materials shall be placed in a school library.

Donations and Gifts

The District appreciates financial donations and gifts intended to sustain and support its school library system. Individuals or organizations wishing to make financial donations to support the District’s libraries shall follow the procedures outlined in School Board Policy 920 (Gifts and Bequests).

The District shall not accept unsolicited donations or gifts of library materials for inclusion in school libraries. Individuals or organizations that wish to make gifts or donations of library material to the District may do so by selecting materials identified on the District school library donation list. This donation list shall be created by the school librarians, and the library materials contained therein must be approved by the Library Material Review Committee (“Committee”) for inclusion on that list. The donation list shall be publicized and periodically updated as needed. Donations or gifts of library materials contained on the District donation list may be accepted, and appropriate acknowledgement of such donations shall be made. The District reserves the right to accept or decline any donation or gift of library materials, even if it appears on the District donation list.

Weeding and Replacement

The District shall take reasonable measures to ensure that school library collections of materials remain current, viable and useful to the students they serve. An active and continuous weeding program – where obsolete or damaged library materials may be removed from the collection – is essential for maintaining school library collections.

The school librarian shall be responsible for weeding the school library collection in their school building at least once each school year, subject to the criteria specified below. The school librarian shall maintain a list of library materials weeded from the collection, which identifies by title the library material being removed, the reasons for removal and the date of removal. This weeding list shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools or ~~her~~ designee and made available to the School Board for informational purposes upon request.

Library materials shall be subject to weeding for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The materials are lost, physically damaged, worn or mutilated.
2. Duplicate copies of the same material that are seldom used or checked out by students.
3. Materials that contain outdated or inaccurate information.
4. Materials that have been superseded by later editions of the same title.

5. Materials that have been replaced by similar or comparable library materials addressing the same subject matter.
6. Materials no longer of interest to students as evidenced by three or fewer students checking out the material over the past three school years.

When discarding weeded library materials, the school librarian shall:

1. Remove all District and/or school identification marks.
2. Remove the bar code or pocket and check-out card, if applicable.
3. Stamp the material "Discard."
4. Remove the material from the library circulation system.
5. Include the material on the weeding list of discarded materials in compliance with this policy.

Before discarding weeded materials in good condition, a school library with the prior permission of the School Board may offer such materials to the local library, another school library or an institution or organization that promotes reading among school-aged children.

The weeding criteria shall not apply to archival or historical materials stored in a school library that relate directly to the District's history. For example, copies of high school yearbooks, graduation ceremony programs, school newspapers or other similar materials that are maintained to preserve a school's history or local history would be exempt from weeding criteria.

Content Advisory List

The Library Material Review Committee ("Committee") is authorized to develop content advisory lists to make parents and guardians aware of subject matters addressed in some library materials. The content advisory lists are not intended to call into question the appropriateness of any library materials for inclusion in a school library, but instead to make parents and guardians aware of library materials that they may wish for their children to either access or avoid when using the school library.

The Committee may rely upon the school librarian in each school to identify library materials for inclusion on the content advisory list, as well as to compile the contents of the content advisory list.

The Committee shall publicize a library content advisory list for each school library at least once each school year. The content advisory list shall delineate the title and author of each listed library material and briefly identify the reasons for its inclusion on the list. The content advisory list shall be publicly accessible to District staff, students and their parents/guardians.

A school librarian is not required to deny a student access to library materials included on a content advisory list unless the student's parent/guardian has completed the "opt-out" procedure for their child to be denied access to such material.

Parental/Guardians Opt-Out for Library Materials

Pennsylvania law respects the rights of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing of their children, which includes the right to make certain decisions regarding the education of their children. Consistent with these parental rights, the School Board creates an "opt-out" procedure to allow parents and guardians to restrict their

child's access to certain library materials.

Parents and guardians shall be afforded the opportunity to review the library materials available in the school library through the Warwick Destiny Catalog, or other electronic databases identifying the contents of school library collections.

To respect parental wishes, while at the same time respecting the diversity of materials within school libraries, the School Board directs that the administration to implement the following program to allow parents and guardians to "opt-out" their children from being able to check out certain library materials from the school library as follows:

1. If material is contained within the school library, where the child attends school, the parent or guardian may email the school's librarian an "opt-out" request explaining their wish to restrict their child's ability to access specific material. Parent/guardian "opt-out" requests cannot be made for general subject matters or categories of library material.
2. Upon receipt of a valid parental/guardian "opt-out" request, the school librarian shall place this restriction in the child's Destiny Account within one week of the date of the request, subject to the number of similar requests for restrictions made at that school library at a given time. The processing of "opt out" requests may be delayed slightly when a large number are received within a short period of time.
3. This parental/guardian "opt-out" request shall remain in place throughout their child's enrollment in the District, unless and until the parent/guardian make an affirmative request to end the "opt-out."

Parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to communicate with their children about any "opt-out" requests they make to minimize potential confusion about what library materials a child may or may not access. Such parental communications will ensure school librarians will not be the first person to alert a child to any restriction upon their ability to select library materials.

If multiple households are involved in a child's education, parents and guardians are responsible to facilitate any decision on "opt-out" requests and to communicate with one another about any restrictions on the ability of a child to access library materials.

Parents and guardians "opt-out" requests shall not be used to substantially impair a child's participation in assigned curricular activities.

Library Material Challenge Procedures

Five or more parents or guardians of District students may formally challenge library materials in their student's school library on the basis of appropriateness and that the library material fails to meet the selection criteria in this policy.

In making any challenge, the group shall submit their challenge in writing, which shall address each of the below requirements:

1. Verify that each of the parents/guardians identified as a party to the challenge reviewed the entirety of the library material being challenged, as opposed to exclusively relying upon a third-party summary of the contents of the challenged library material.
2. Explain why the parental/guardian "opt-out" procedures offered under this policy are inadequate to restrict their own children's access to the challenged library material in the school library.

3. Explain why the parents/guardians believe the inclusion of the challenged library materials was not selected in compliance with the selection criteria outlined in the policy or its related administrative regulations.
4. Identify alternative materials that address the subject matter of the challenged library material from a similar viewpoint that the parents/guardians believe is more suitable for inclusion in the school library.
5. Provide any other information the parents/guardians believe is relevant to support their position that the challenged library materials should be removed from the school library.

The District shall not be required to consider any challenge that does not meaningfully address each of the above requirements for filing a challenge. The District shall not be required to consider more than one (1) challenge at a time, and each challenge will be processed in the order in which they are received. When multiple challenges exist, a challenge is not considered received per the deadlines below until its processing has begun.

Challenged library materials shall remain in circulation at the school library during any challenge review.

Any challenge shall be submitted to the Superintendent's designee for review and to make an initial determination. The Superintendent's designee may consult with District staff members to gather information to make an initial determination on the challenge. The initial determination shall be made within forty-five (45) days of the receipt of a challenge unless additional time is necessary. The initial determination shall be made in writing and explain why the challenge is either granted or denied. A copy of the initial determination shall be provided to the parents/guardians listed in the challenge.

Parents/guardians may appeal an initial determination within ten (10) days of their receipt to the Challenge Review Committee ("Committee"). The Challenge Review Committee shall be comprised of one teacher, a supervisor/lead teacher/head teacher, a school counselor/facilitator, the school librarian, the building principal, one district-wide administrator and the Assistant Superintendent. Any appeal shall respond to reasons articulated in the initial determination. The Committee, in its sole discretion, may convene a meeting to ask questions and receive information from the initial decisionmaker and parents/guardians regarding the appeal. In absence of such a meeting, the Committee shall evaluate the challenged library material, the challenge and the initial determination in making its collective decision whether to grant or deny the appeal. The Committee shall render its decision on the appeal within sixty (60) days of its filing or the date of any meeting, whichever is later. The Committee's decision shall be in writing and explain the reasons for its conclusions. The Committee's decision shall be final.

The same library material may not be challenged for at least three years after a final decision is made regarding a challenge.

Compliance with the Policy

The School Board expects District staff members and Library Material Review Committee members to comply with this policy when fulfilling their respective responsibilities in reviewing or selecting library materials; creating content advisory lists; weeding library materials or processing or responding to parental "opt out" requests or library material challenges.

In the event the School Board determines substantial noncompliance with this policy in either the selection of library materials for inclusion in a school library or the granting, or denial, of a library material challenge, the School Board by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a public meeting may reverse that decision; provided, however, a reasonable opportunity is provided for the Superintendent and the School Board to gather and review the facts

surrounding the contested decision before any such action is scheduled or taken. The School Board shall not be required to have a two-thirds (2/3) vote in order to approve a settlement of a civil action filed in court of competent jurisdiction that challenges the lawfulness of a decision or action made under this policy.

For purposes of this policy, substantial noncompliance with this policy does not include discretionary decisions made in good faith by District staff members and/or Library Material Review Committee, which someone may disagree with, if those decisions reasonably fall within the scope of the applicable definitions and/or requirements of this policy.

Severability

If any portion of this policy is determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to either be unlawful or unconstitutional, that portion of the policy shall be rendered void and no longer enforceable without impacting the remaining portions of this policy that are deemed to be lawful or constitutional.