

## **Selection Guidelines for Montgomery County Public School Libraries**

### **Opening statement**

The philosophy of the Montgomery County school division is to provide educational opportunities to meet the needs of students in a world with rapidly changing social order and a constantly shifting economy. The emphasis is on tailoring programs to develop potential individually rather than on providing one standard curriculum for all. Thus, the planning is based on a dynamic point of view. Its major aim is to help individual students to discover their strengths and their limitations, to develop their talents, and to become responsible and contributing members of society (MCPS Policy 6-1.1). As necessary and valued parts of our schools, our Libraries adhere to this philosophy both in how they are run and how materials and resources are chosen.

### **Responsibility for Materials Selection**

As all Montgomery County Public School personnel are employees of the School Board, ultimate decision in materials selection rests with the Board. While recommendation of materials may involve many individuals within the school, day to day decision power for materials selection rests with certified Library personnel. Selection of materials occurs following the guidance set forth in the American Library Association's Bill of Rights (appended to these Guidelines). To this end, the American Library Association (ALA) states that principles must be placed above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality and appropriateness.

### **Methods and criteria for selection**

The Libraries of Montgomery County Public Schools maintain and provide access to collections and resources in accordance with MCPS Policy 6-5.2. Library collections:

1. Support the curriculum;
2. Stimulate the acquisition of factual knowledge and the development of literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards;
3. Contain a wide range of views on issues so that students may develop the practice of critical reading and thinking;
4. Are representative of religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contribution to the American heritage; and,
5. Are of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library media center.

The following kinds of material should be selected for the school library:

- \*Materials integral to the instructional program.
- \*Materials appropriate for the reading level and understanding of students in the school
- \*Materials reflecting the interests and needs of the students and faculty served by the school library
- \*Materials warranting inclusion in the collection because of their literary and/or artistic value and merit
- \*Materials presenting information with the greatest degree of accuracy and clarity possible.
- \*Materials representing a fair and unbiased presentation of information. In controversial areas, the school librarians, in cooperation with the faculty, should select materials representing as many shades of opinion as possible, in order that varying viewpoints are available to students.

### **Procedures for Selection**

- \*In selecting learning resources, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will attempt to consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible. Professionally recognized reviewing organizations include, but are not limited to, Horn Book Magazine, Kirkus Review, Library Media Connections, School Library Journal, and Voices of Youth Advocates.
- \*Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, students, district personnel, and community persons, as appropriate. Requests, suggestions, and reactions for the purchase of instructional materials shall be gathered from staff to the greatest extent possible and students when appropriate.
- \*Gift materials shall be judged by the selection criteria and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.

\*Selection is an ongoing process that includes removing materials no longer timely or relevant, misleading, superseded by newer edition, lacking in discernible literary or scientific merit and/or irrelevant to needs/interests of school community.

\*Selection includes replacing lost and worn materials still of educational value.

\*Materials containing controversial views are judged as entire works, not as isolated passages.

## **Special Concerns**

At the discretion of the Librarian, entire collections of a specific format may be restricted to one patron type (e.g. DVDs to Teachers only), but the general collection itself will not be restricted to any one subset of patrons. Parent permission will not be required to access or check out Library materials. Available materials will be kept on the open shelves, not in a restricted area where students must ask to have an item retrieved for them.

## **Request for Reconsideration of Material**

Upon receipt of a request for reconsideration of Library material, The Librarian will follow the steps outlined in MCPS Policy 6-6.5 (appended). Both the School Administration and MCPS Library Supervisor must be notified. No material or resource shall be removed prior to the completion of the reconsideration process and filing of the reconsideration committee's written recommendation with the Librarian and Library Supervisor.

The reconsideration committee formed by the Librarian and School Administration should include a certified Librarian, ideally the Librarian of the school receiving the reconsideration request. All members of the committee must read/watch the entire resource being challenged prior to discussion and voting. The committee decision will be provided in writing to all members of the committee and filed in the School Library and with the Library Supervisor. Following a receipt of a written reconsideration request, the Librarian will report the challenge and committee decision to the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom.

## **Review of Guidelines**

The MCPS Libraries Selection Guidelines will be reviewed at least yearly by a committee of MCPS Librarians and revised as needed as determined by the committee.

## **Appended Documents:**

MCPS Policy 6-6.5

MCPS Reconsideration Form

ALA Library Bill of Rights

## **References:**

Fletcher-Spear, Kristin, and Kelly Tyler, eds. *Intellectual Freedom for Teens: A Practical Guide for Young Adult and School Librarians*. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2014. Print.

"Library Policies and Guidelines." *Library of Virginia Policies and Guidelines*. Library of Virginia, n.d. Web. 28 Apr. 2016. <<http://www.lva.virginia.gov/about/policies/>>.

Magi, Trina J., and Martin Garnar, eds. *Intellectual Freedom Manual*. 9th ed. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2015. Print.

Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association. "Workbook for Selection Policy Writing." *American Library Association*. American Library Association, n.d. Web. 28 Apr. 2016. <<http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/preparation/workbook-selection-policy-writing>>.

Prepared by Kelly Passek

in accordance with the American Library Association's Workbook for Selection Policy Writing

(<http://www.ala.org/bbooks/challengedmaterials/preparation/workbook-selection-policy-writing>)

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## MCPS Policy 6-6.5: Complaints Regarding Instructional Materials and Learning Resources

Book

Section 6: Instruction

Section

Article 5: Instructional Support

Title

Complaints Regarding Instructional Materials and Learning Resources

Number

6-5.6

Status

Active

Legal

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-253.13:7(D)(2); 8 VAC 20-170-10

Adopted

April 1, 2004

### **Challenging Controversial Instructional Materials**

Parents and other community members have the opportunity to request reconsideration of selected materials or to challenge the use of selected materials through the following procedure:

1. Complete the "Challenge of Controversial Instructional Materials" form;
2. Submit the completed form to the building principal;
3. The building principal convenes a faculty committee to review the challenged material(s);
4. The committee recommends the continued use or the removal of the challenged material(s); and
5. The building principal informs the parent or community member who initiated the challenge and forwards a report of the committee decision to the Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching.

If the parent or community member is dissatisfied with the outcome of the challenge, he/she may then present that challenge to the Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching, who will review the challenged materials and make a recommendation regarding the materials. If the parent or community member is still dissatisfied with the outcome, he/she may appeal to the division superintendent and then to the School Board.

If a parent objects to his/her child reading specific selections, teachers may provide alternate selections or activities for students on an individual basis. This provision should not be interpreted as excusing students from basic textbook materials necessary for the completion of a course of study.

*Adopted: April 2004*

*Accessed 28 April 2016 from <http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/mcps/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=8X9KCW51440D#>*

Challenge of Controversial Instructional Materials Form (from MCPS Policy 6-6.5)

CHALLENGE OF CONTROVERSIAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Type of Material (book, video, software, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher/Producer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Published: \_\_\_\_\_

Challenge Initiated By: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. No.: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual

Organization/Group (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you become aware of the use of this material in the school?
2. Where is the material being used (class, library, club, etc)?
3. What do you find objectionable about this material? Please be specific; cite page numbers, particular words, ideas, etc.
4. What effect do you believe the objectionable material might have on a student?
5. What value, if any, do you see in this material?
6. For what age group would you recommend this material?
7. Which portion of the material did you read, view, or hear (list or describe the specific sections)?
8. Are you aware of any written critiques of this material?
9. Why do you believe this work has been included in the instructional program?
10. What do you request the school to do with this work?
11. Other comments or suggestions?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant Date

NOTE: This form, once completed, should be turned in to the principal.

## The 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 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

*Accessed 28 April 2016 from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>*