

## **LIBRARY SELECTION POLICY**

This policy was compiled by the media specialist and approved by the administration and board of education of BoiseCitySchools to be the governing policy discerning selection of materials for Boise City School Media Center.

### **Philosophy of the Media Center**

Living in an information age, a primary objective of education is to learn how to identify, locate, organize, and present information in a clear, concise, and persuasive manner. Students need to develop skills to manage complex information formats making the media center an integral part of the total curriculum. It is here that students achieve these skills and foster a lifelong interest in both reading and knowledge. Each student should have access to an effective, integrated media program that reflects the curriculum and the needs of the school community and the world in general.

### **Responsibility for Selection**

The responsibility for selection rests with the Boise City Board of Education. Authority for the selection of proper materials shall be delegated to the media center staff. Materials shall be selected in accordance with the principles established by the School Library Bill of Rights (appendix A) as approved by the American Association of School Librarians. The professional media center staff in collaboration with the faculty, parents, and students will select materials for the media center.

### **Library Users**

Boise City is a small community where everyone comes together to support the financial efforts and well being of the school that is at the heart of that community. The school tries to meet the needs of all community members who may require the occasional use of materials provided by the school as we strive to reach cohesiveness within our small town. Potential daily patrons of our school media center include not only every student and faculty member at Boise City Schools but also those parents desiring to acquire a patron number. Home schooled students may request the use of the school media center for a fee.

### **Types of Material for Inclusion**

Library materials are defined as all electronic, print, and nonprint resources, excluding textbooks, used by students and teachers for the District's educational program.

Instructional materials are chosen because they are of interest and have learning value of the student in the community. Materials are not excluded because of race, nationality, religion, or political views of the writer.

Insofar as it is practical, materials are provided which present all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our time: international, national, and local. Books and materials of sound factual authority are not removed or banned from library resource center shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

Multiple items of outstanding quality and much in demand media are purchased as needed.

Nonfiction subjects which are topics of criticism are carefully considered before selection. Among these are:

Religion-Factual unbiased material, which represents all major religions, may be included in the media center collection. Bibles and other sacred writings are acceptable. Publications from religious bodies may be selected if they have general value or appear in magazine indexes.

Ideologies-The media center should, without making any effort to sway the reader's judgment, make available basic factual information on the maturity level of its reading public of ideologies or philosophies that are of current or continuing interest.

**LIBRARY SELECTION (Cont.)**

Science-Medical and scientific knowledge suitable to the development stage of the student should be made available without any biased selection of facts.

The media center purchases both videos and DVDs in support of the curriculum of the school. The same criteria used to choose books also applies to their purchase; however, in their case, highest purchase priority is given to specific teacher requests. Although videos and DVDs may be checked out by all library patrons, for the most part they are used in class.

The media center purchases audio visual equipment determined by specific teacher needs and needs of the school as a whole. Providing the audio visual equipment collection is large enough to support all staff needing use of the equipment, equipment may be kept for extended amounts of time. Audio visual equipment should be checked in at the end of the year and housed in the media center during summer months for cleaning and repairs.

Periodicals should support and enhance the curriculum and provide leisure reading for students. Two to four magazine subscriptions will be acquired as needed in addition to school access of the state provided EbscoHost periodical database.

Local newspapers, chosen for accuracy, objectivity, accessibility, demand, and prices, will be provided through the library for those classrooms utilizing the paper to meet state standards. Documentation of how the papers are being used to meet these standards may be required.

Reference materials, both print and nonprint, will be chosen based on authority, cost effectiveness, arrangement of indexing and user friendliness. Every effort should be made to keep updates for reference materials current for the past five years.

**Criteria for Selection**

Selections are made for, and in accordance with, the different maturity levels of the students

Materials are selected which fill a need related to the curriculum and/or contribute to the development and enrichment of the student

Interests, needs, abilities of the students, and correlation of materials with the curriculum are dominating factors in the selection of materials.

**Evaluation of Materials**

The author should be qualified as a subject specialist.

Concepts, content, and vocabulary should be appropriate for the potential user.

Facts presented should be accurate and up-to-date.

Information should be logically arranged.

Subject matter should hold the attention of the student.

Format of the material should be attractive and durable.

Illustrations should be pertinent and well executed.

Evaluation from standard selection aids should be given consideration.

**LIBRARY SELECTION (Cont.)****Selection Tools**

In selecting materials for purchase, the media specialist evaluates the existing collection and consults reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids, such as:

Book list  
School Library Journal

**Acquiring Materials**

The Boise City School does not condone previews of materials sent by companies due to storage and return issues. Visiting bookstores for previewing is encouraged.

To reduce paperwork and receive best prices, ordering from online sources is preferred but not limited to.

**Gift Books and Materials**

Gift books and materials are accepted with the understanding that they must meet the same selection criteria as materials purchased with board of education funds. The practice of a donor's purchasing new books or materials as media center gifts is discouraged. It is preferable that donors make monetary gifts for the purchase of books and materials because the school receives a discount and can purchase more books for the same amount of money.

Gift books and other materials, once accepted by the Boise City Public Schools, become the property of the Boise City Public Schools.

**Reconsideration of Materials**

Despite the quality of the selection process and the need to provide a variety of material on all sides of issues according to the Freedom to Read Statement (Appendix B), occasional objections to library materials may be made. The following procedure shall be followed when one has a complaint about material held in the library media center:

Upon receiving a complaint, the librarian will hold a conference with the person making the complaint. The principal of the building will be notified and may be present at the conference.

If the problem cannot be resolved in the conference, the citizen will be given a copy of the selection policy and a complaint form (Appendix C), which is to be filled out completely, and submitted to the principal. If the complainant does not return this form to the building principal within two weeks of receiving the packet, the objection will be considered resolved.

Once a complaint form is received, the principal will appoint a review committee composed of the media specialist, the principal, two teachers, and a willing officer/parent member of PTO.

No administrator, media specialist, or teacher may agree to withdraw an item without referring it to the review committee, which determines whether the materials should be withdrawn from the media center. Material will remain in circulation until the review committee makes a decision.

The decision of the committee is submitted to the complainant and a file of the objection and decision is kept on file by the media specialist.

In the event that the complainant does not accept the decision of the review committee, he/she may appeal to the board of education through the principal. The final decision then rests with the board of education. The complainant will be notified by mail of the board's decision.

**LIBRARY SELECTION (Cont.)**

Once an item has been challenged, reviewed, and justified by the review committee and the board of education, if another challenge is raised against it within a five-year period, the complaint may be dismissed.

**Weeding the Collection**

Assessment of the collection includes taking inventory of existing materials, assessing materials in relation to needs of instructional units, and weeding outdated and inappropriate materials. The collection will continually be evaluated to ensure a reputation of providing reliable information.

Library media materials should be weeded if they:

- Are in poor physical condition
- Have not been circulated in the last five years
- Are outdated in content, use, or accuracy (Copyright date should be considered; however, do not make a decision to weed based solely on the copyright date of the material. Some older material may be considered classic or may be of great historical value to your collection.)
- Are mediocre or poor in quality
- Are biased or portray stereotypes
- Are inappropriate in reading level
- Duplicate information which is no longer in heavy demand
- Are superseded by new or revised information
- Are outdated and unattractive format, design, graphics, and illustrations
- Contain information which is inaccessible because they lack a table of contents, adequate indexing, and searching capabilities
- Are not selected in accordance with general selection criteria

Weeded materials will be offered to students of Boise City Schools for a small price or for free and any money collected should be deposited in the Boise City Media Center activity account.

**Replacement of Materials**

In the event that a book checked out by a student or faculty member is deemed "lost", the patron may:

Replace the title in the same format as the one lost, or

Pay the replacement cost of the book, which will be placed in the media center activity account so those funds may go towards replacing the book in the collection.

**LIBRARY SELECTION (Cont.)****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 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

## LIBRARY SELECTION (Cont.)

**The Freedom to Read Statement**

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 or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, 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 counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. 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.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. 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 or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. 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 controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that 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 toward 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 that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by 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 that 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.

### **LIBRARY SELECTION (Cont.)**

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 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 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 bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

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 that 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 expression 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 values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that 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 the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. 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; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

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. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

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 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 the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

**LIBRARY SELECTION (Cont.)**

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is 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.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.