Instruction

Library Materials Selection

I. Objectives of Materials Selection

It is the objective of education in modern society to develop within individuals a sense of discernment in evaluating all aspects of their environment. Understanding our culture and developing a free mind is a necessity. Because of the large diversity of ideas being presented through the mass media, students must learn to discriminate between quality and mediocrity with penetration and practical judgment. One method of developing acumen within our young people is to present them with ideas found in many kinds of materials.

Thus it is that the Adrian Public School Libraries promote the intellectual, cultural, social, and ethical development of students by providing materials which broaden the experience of the curriculum. Since financial and other limitations prevent purchasing all materials that help meet these obligations, it is necessary to apply certain criteria in the selection of each item.

II. General Criteria

In selecting materials for the school libraries, the criteria uses is determined by four considerations: the material contributes to the education of the reader has literary value, is appropriate to the curriculum being taught, and is readable in structure and content for a particular group of students.

III. Library Bill of Rights

Because of the belief in the freedom to read, view, and listen, the Adrian Public Schools’ Libraries subscribe to the School Library Bill of Rights. School libraries are concerned with generating understanding of American freedoms and with the preservation of these freedoms through the development of informed and responsible citizens. To this end the American Association of School Librarians reaffirms the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association and asserts that the responsibility of the school library is:

- To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the pupils served.
- To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
- To provide a background of information which will enable pupils to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical reading and thinking.

To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

The right to read, view, and listen is basic to a democratic society. This right is only tenable on the assumption that the educated citizen of the United States is able to use discretion when making a choice. The freedom to read, view, and listen allows the individual access to a wide diversity of ideas and expressions on all subjects. It is not the librarians' role to endorse ideas or label materials as subversive or dangerous.

IV. Criteria Use in Selecting Materials

A. General Criteria – the following criteria are applied to the selection of all materials:
   1. Purpose of the materials.
   2. Reputation and significance of the author or producer.
   3. Timeliness and permanence of the material.
   4. Importance of subject matter to the collection.
   5. Authority in handling the subject.
   7. Price.
   8. Readability and appeal.
   9. Quality (writing, illustrations, etc.)

B. Specific Criteria
   1. Fiction: Because fiction has assumed an important role in instructional programs, the libraries purchase a variety of books in this literary form to meet the needs of students varying in reading ability, social background, and taste. Although it is almost impossible to set up a single standard of literary excellence, it is the libraries’ policy to select fiction which is well written and based on authentic human experience, and exclude weak, incompetent, and cheaply sentimental writing intentionally sensation, morbid, or erotic.

   2. Subjects of Frequent Controversy: The following policies have been adopted concerning areas of controversy:
      a. Religion – The libraries provide factual, objective material representing all major religions.
      b. Ideologies – The libraries provide, without trying to influence the reader, basic factual information on any ideology or political philosophy which exerts a strong force on current events.
c. Sex and profanity – Materials presenting accents on sex are put to a stern test of literary merit. Purpose of the materials and realistic presentation of life is a prime consideration. Factual material concerning sex education is judged on curricular needs and objectivity before being included in the collection.

d. Minority groups – The libraries recognize all citizens of the country and will represent them in its collection. Values presented in the material are not always compatible with the majority. That material which is realistic, objective, and focused on the level of the students is selected.

3. Periodicals: Periodicals are selected to provide current thought in various fields and to supplement the book collection. Individual magazines are selected by the following criteria:

   a. Accuracy and objectivity.
   b. Accessibility of content through indexes.
   c. Demand.
   d. Value in reference service.
   e. Representation of a point of view or a subject needed in the collection.
   f. Local interest in the subject matter.
   g. General age group interest.
   h. Price.

4. Newspapers: The libraries include newspapers to present the most current news and information. The collection includes the local newspapers, the Detroit newspaper, and one or more newspapers of nationally recognized merit.

5. Audiovisual: Selection of audiovisual materials is based upon:

   b. Format requirements.
   c. Quality of production.
   d. Reputation of the producer.
   e. Approval after preview.
   f. Price.
V. Publications Used in Selection

Standard book lists and book reviewing periodicals are used to guide the librarians in their selection. The following are some of the aids used:

A. **Standard Catalog** series.
B. **A Basic Book Collection for Elementary School.**
C. Book lists issued by professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English.
D. Reviewing media such as Booklist, School Library Journal, Horn Book, and others.

VI. Responsibility of Selection

Ultimate legal responsibility of selecting rests with the Adrian Board of Education. Selection is delegated to building librarians, who enlist the aid of teachers, students, administrators, and parents in making final decisions which meet with Board policy.

VII. Criticism of specific materials should be handled by the building principal. When the principal feels he/she cannot resolve the problem in terms of the policy as stated, he/she should turn the matter over to the Superintendent and assure the citizen that the criticism will be given a fair and objective hearing, utilizing the following procedure.

A. Criticism must be presented in writing and directed to the Superintendent and must include such specific information as author, title, publisher, and the reason for the criticism, giving specific references to those aspects of sections of the book deemed objectionable

B. The statement must be signed and identified so that a reply can be given.

C. The material should be reviewed in the light of the objections by a committee consisting of a librarian, other members of the school staff designated by the school principal, and the Associate Superintendent for Instruction.

D. The report of the committee should be forwarded to the Superintendent for presentation to the Board of Education for review and possible action.

E. The decision of the Board of Education shall be sent in writing to the complainant.

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