



# Board of Education Policy Manual

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## 4000 Series: Instruction

### Policy 4513 LIBRARY MATERIALS

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Board of Education has the responsibility and the authority to approve the library materials of the district libraries and to maintain an up-to-date collection. The responsibility for selection of school library materials is delegated to the certified school librarians, who shall discharge this obligation consistent with the Board's adopted selection criteria and procedures (below) with the oversight of administration. The objectives of collection development within the school library media center are:

- To promote literacy, and offer support for lifelong learning for students of all ages;
- To help students pursue personal and aesthetic growth and demonstrate social responsibility;
- To provide access to a variety of opinions on matters of current interest and encourage freedom of expression;
- To encourage continuous learning and to supplement classroom instruction;
- To maintain a virtual collection of resources that is widely accessible;
- To present multiple perspectives on the culture, history, activities and contributions of the persons and groups comprising the diverse fabric of our society;
- To be accessible to students at all reading levels and to encourage recreational reading across literary genres; and
- To reflect varied interest, abilities, learning needs, and maturity levels.

#### CONSIDERATION OF SELECTING TITLES

Library Media Specialists will select materials after consulting reviews from professional journals (to include but not limited to: Mackin reviews; the American Library Association Journal; the School Library Journal; School Library Connect; Booklist, etc.). The following factors are considered in selecting titles:

- **Age-Appropriateness for recommended levels.** Library media materials in a given library

should be only those that are broadly considered age-appropriate for the specific level. If “age appropriate” needs further delineation within a building, appropriate safeguards will be put in place (see below). Materials should be accessible to students of varied abilities, and meet informational and interest needs of all students.

- ***Alignment to the curriculum and the objectives of the instructional program.*** Library media materials should be selected on the basis of assessed curricular needs. Materials should reflect the identified learning outcomes of the instructional program. Materials should support and enrich all segments of the curriculum and should encourage students to read for pleasure by appealing to student interests.
- ***Accuracy of content.*** Authority of the author, organization, publisher/producer should be a consideration in selection. Reflective of the pluralistic nature of a global society Library media materials should provide a global perspective and promote diversity as a positive attribute of our society. It is important to include materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures.
- ***Freedom from bias and stereotype.*** Materials should reflect the basic humanity of all people and be free of stereotypes, caricatures, distorted dialect, sexual bias, and other offensive characteristics. Library materials concerning religious, social, and political content should inform rather than indoctrinate.
- ***Representative of differing viewpoints on controversial subjects.*** Students have the right to information on both sides of controversial issues. By having access to a variety of resources students will have the knowledge base to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Good faith effort should be made to provide a balanced look at any given topic. Books specifically written on controversial topics should be housed in a section of the library specific to this topic. If displayed, good faith efforts should be made to display multiple titles with balanced views on the topic.
- ***Appropriate format for greatest accessibility and ease of use.*** Library media materials should be available in a variety of formats, e.g., print, nonprint, electronic, multimedia, to meet the needs and learning styles of a diverse student population.
- ***Recent copyright date as appropriate to the subject.*** Copyright dates should be assessed for currency of the information as it relates to the content and purpose of the item.
- ***Appropriate for students with special needs.*** The school library media center provides free and equitable access to all information.

## REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Board has provided a process by which a member of the school community can request that a title be reconsidered for inclusion in the collection of a particular building. The process is outlined in Exhibit E4513.1.

**Safeguards for Books that Vary in Age-Appropriateness within a Building.** Because of the wide span of maturity levels that can exist within a given building, there can be titles that are appropriate for some students and not for others. While our libraries only contain materials that are recommended for students of that particular school age, some materials identified for the upper end of the grade range may contain more mature subject matter. Specific safeguards are in place to ensure parents are aware of a student’s request to

sign out these materials.

**Elementary Schools:** Any resource that is deemed appropriate only for the oldest of the elementary population is flagged in the library database. Any student wishing to check out one of these resources will be given a permission slip ([E4513.5](#)) to obtain parental permission prior to checking out the resource.

**Middle School:** The middle school serves students with a wide range of age and maturity. Physical materials identified as containing a more mature subject matter are flagged in our system and may be shelved in an 8th-grade-only section. The 8th-grade-only section is located next to the circulation desk and as such is easily monitored by library staff. Although they have been judged to be of value using the criteria above, these resources contain varying degrees of mature language and situations. The district has put safeguards in place for access to these titles. Parents are given the opportunity to require a permission slip (see [E4513.3](#)) before their 8th grade student can borrow from this 8th-grade-only section. (There will be times when 6th and 7th graders will be allowed to borrow books from this collection. We will require a signed permission slip from a parent/guardian to do so.)

Included with all middle school student's library accounts is access to several eBook collections (BH-BL, BOCES, and NY Reads). These collections are similar to the collection accessible through the local public library. Many students enjoy the eBook format and this collection provides a rich supplement to what we offer in our school library. While the titles and selections in this electronic collection are all deemed by the various organizations to be age appropriate for middle school students, they include both the "Juvenile" and "Young Adult" categories. This presents a unique challenge at the middle level. The age ranges for the Juvenile Fiction and Young Adult Fiction classification varies depending on which professional body has assigned the classification.

By default, middle school students have access to both "Juvenile" and "Young Adult" eBook titles. The BH-BL Library Media staff does not have the ability to fine tune and categorize these titles. The 8th grade only option for the BH-BL hard copy collection (described above) does not exist in the eBook collections. As such we offer all parents/guardians of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders the opportunity to change their access to "Juvenile" only for the eBook accounts if they so desire by indicating their preference on the attached form. If parents opt for "Juvenile-only" for the eBooks, the collection will be largely elementary in nature. Our Library Media department continues to advocate for the ability to fine tune and customize these regional eBook connections on the local level.

At the beginning of the year, the principal will send a letter (see [E4513.3](#)) to all parents of middle school students notifying them of various options they have to restrict access of their middle school student to some of the more advanced "Young Adult" materials.

**High School:** Materials are selected for the high school library using the criteria discussed above. Titles are those that are broadly deemed age-appropriate for high school students, but as with any collection, individual parents may have different opinions on particular titles. Parents who have concerns about materials their child may access should contact the high school principal or the high school library media specialist.

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