

Approved: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Board Library Guiding Protocols

The Elizabeth School District's mission is to provide students with excellent learning opportunities that inspire a passion for learning, develop individual potential, and prepare them for a successful future. This requires access to resources facilitating such passion and interest. Additionally, Elizabeth School District believes that parental involvement and community collaboration are equally necessary to ensure students' most effective educational services pursuant to the district's educational philosophies and goals. To that end, the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC), and pursuant to District policy, has developed the following guiding protocols to ensure a consistent, transparent, and balanced approach to library services.

Purpose of Library Services

Library services in the Elizabeth School District aim to ensure students have access to age-appropriate materials necessary to facilitate the district's mission of providing students with excellent learning opportunities that inspire a passion for learning.

System of Transparency

The system of transparency within the Elizabeth School District library system is anchored in three primary protocols: a well-defined and consistent process for the ongoing analysis of resources and obtaining future materials, parental access to their student's circulation history and the library registry, and a notification system to inform parents and guardians of materials their students is attempting to access which have been flagged for sensitive content.

Library materials include any print or nonprint materials that are available to students for general use through the District schools' libraries and classrooms, including books, e-books, material available in a digital library database, streaming videos, sound recordings, periodicals, newspapers, applications and subscription content in any form, along with any films or videos in any format.

Protocol 1 - Analysis and Selection Process

This protocol, in conjunction with related District policies, is established to ensure the review of library materials in the District is conducted in a manner that promotes the educational needs and values of the community and considers age-appropriateness. It seeks to ensure transparency in the management of library materials in the District and aims to promote openness and accountability in providing access to educational resources for students and the school community.

- Library and/or district staff, as well as members of the CRC, will evaluate existing library materials for potential age-level sensitive content using the following resources: Goodreads, Trigger Warning Database, Book Trigger Warnings, booklooks.org, and/or Junior Library Guild. Staff will also evaluate any parent/guardian-identified books of concern that are brought to the CRC or district administration for review. Although any flag for sensitive content will be considered for age-level appropriateness, special attention will be given to: graphic violence, sexual content, profanity/obscenity, ideations of self-harm or mental illness, religious viewpoints, drug or excessive alcohol use,

racism/discrimination. Materials reviewed and flagged may be purchased if the school principal confirms that such library materials will contribute to the attainment of course objectives directly related to Board-adopted academic standards. However, these materials will be considered for labeling as sensitive content and reported to the CRC in the annual library services summary, or as otherwise required.

- All materials maintained and purchased by schools are to facilitate the district's mission of providing students with excellent learning opportunities that inspire a passion for learning, developing individual potential, and preparing them for a successful future.
- Library and/or district staff as well as members of the CRC will analyze the school library resources on an ongoing basis to determine the needs and appropriateness of library materials, reporting at least annually to the Chief Academic Officer, the CRC, and BOE. At a minimum, this includes:
 - Conducting an analysis of the catalog of all materials within the library catalog to determine which of them may require further consideration.
 - Comparing the catalog against an appropriate book list as recommended by the Curriculum Review Committee. Any materials identified as potentially concerning will be shared with the Chief Academic Officer, who will share them with the Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) annually in a library services summary before December 1st of each school year, and as otherwise required when specific library materials are brought up as a concern by a parent/guardian.
 - Purchases may be made from any vendor unless specifically excluded by the School Board direction. All suggested material purchases will be approved by the Chief Academic Officer prior to purchase.
 - If materials are provided directly to the school from library services (such as bulk shipments), and not deliberately chosen by the school's library staff, staff will review each item for educational and grade-level appropriateness and will evaluate the material using the previously referenced resources for flags of sensitive content.
- In the event any materials are determined to be inappropriate based on age level, flags, or lacking educational merit, these materials will be brought to the principal of the school for further consideration. The principal will bring the materials to the Chief Academic Officer, who will present the information to the CRC, which will make a recommendation to the Chief Academic Officer and the Elizabeth School Board of Education. Examples include adding or deleting titles on the sensitive content catalog.

Protocol 2 - Sensitive Content Catalogs

Elizabeth School District will develop and maintain ***sensitive content catalogs according to these protocols and applicable District policy***. This catalog will be created through the review of current materials and review of materials before purchase using the CRC recommended book review sites. The books identified as containing age-level sensitive content will be flagged within Destiny as containing sensitive topics and placed on the Sensitive Topic Catalog list, which will be updated throughout the year.

All parents/guardians will be automatically set up to have control over their student's access to materials listed in the sensitive content catalog by the following criteria:

- All parents will automatically receive an email from Destiny when their student checks out a book from the Sensitive Topic Catalog.
- If parents/guardians choose, they may OPT their student out of being able to check out any book in the Sensitive Topic Catalog.
- If parents/guardians OPT their student out of the Sensitive Topic Catalog, the student will be told by the librarian, "According to your parents, you are not allowed to check out this book."
- The student will be advised that if they want to check out the book, they will need to talk with their parents and have their parents/guardians contact the librarian directly.

Protocol 3 - Parental Access to Library Catalog and Student History

Elizabeth School District recognizes parent/guardian rights and responsibilities as they pertain to the educational system for their students. This requires transparency not only in the process but also in access. Therefore, Elizabeth School District shall maintain open access for parents and guardians to their student's library account through a parental portal as well as full access to the entire school library catalog. This permits parents/guardians to review, at their discretion and convenience, any materials their student is checking out through the school library.

The following protocols outline the process and guidelines for sensitive topic catalogs: • All materials will be evaluated first concerning educational merit and attainment of course objectives as they relate to Board-adopted academic standards and as to whether they contain Sensitive Topics as described: graphic violence, sexual content, profanity/obscenity, ideations of self-harm or mental illness, religious viewpoints, drug or excessive alcohol use, racism/discrimination.

- Sensitive Topic Catalogs will exist and be available upon request.
- Items will be added to the sensitive topic catalog at the school's and/or district's discretion based on flags as outlined in Protocol 1.
- Titles not in the sensitive content catalog may be referred to the school or district by parents for consideration and will be evaluated as outlined in Protocol 1.
- District will ensure the Destiny Catalog system issues a pop-up warning when a student attempts to check out the material on a sensitive topic catalog.