

LPS Libraries: Selection & Reconsideration Process

The mission of school libraries in Lincoln Public Schools is to empower learners to be curious, critical, and creative thinkers; enthusiastic readers; skillful researchers; and conscientious citizens.

Board of Education Policy delegates to the superintendent of schools or district administrator the authority and responsibility for selection of library materials. Responsibility for actual selection rests with the certified school librarian using the Board's adopted selection criteria and procedures. **Library book selection is a building-based process.** Individual school librarians best know the specific needs and interests of their school community and tailor their collections in order to ensure the resources and materials included in school libraries support the instructional and developmental needs of the children they serve.

LPS libraries are a source of many ideas and perspectives. Not every student, caregiver, or citizen of our community will agree with all of the perspectives or content in every book in the LPS library collection, but this is precisely one of the purposes of a library – to be a resource of many ideas for intellectual inquiry, consideration, and the development of critical thinking skills.

Public schools have a responsibility to develop critical thinking skills in students. This includes resources related to controversial issues in libraries. Controversial issues are included in the school library to help students develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become an informed citizen in preparation for adulthood. However, a PK-12 library collection is not without boundaries. Perspectives and content that are rooted in the explicit oppression, hate, or denial of an individual or group's humanity and right to exist are generally not appropriate for inclusion.

The presence of any particular material in a school library collection does not imply the district's endorsement of the ideas expressed in those materials. The library is simply a provider of information from multiple points of view—if the library “endorses” anything, it is the student's right to have access to a broad selection of materials (American Library Association, 2007).

Selection is a process where the library seeks out materials which provide a diversity of points of view and subject matter to support the educational mission of Lincoln Public Schools. Two LPS School Board Policies inform the selection and acquisitions process for LPS School Libraries: Policy 6440, Curriculum Decisions; and Policy 6450, Controversial Issues. School library selection seeks materials that:

- stimulate growth of students in knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards;
- enable students to make informed decisions in their daily lives;

- reflect a variety of views on issues and topics to encourage critical reading and thinking;
- are representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contribution to our American heritage;
- where the author/artist/composer/editor is reputable, qualified and experienced, and the publisher responsible;
- content is up-to-date and reflects the most recent information available on the topic;
- media, subject matter, vocabulary, and approach should be suitable for the experience and maturity of the intended learners and for intended use of the materials; balanced treatment of controversial matters
- should support curriculum objectives for instructional purposes, including personal reading needs;
- style of presentation should be clear, understandable, creative and stimulating;
- facts should be distinguished from opinions and accurately presented;
- should foster appreciation of literature and aesthetic values, i.e. have literary value;
- should encourage self-instruction and provide a stimulus to creativity;
- illustrations, ideas and content in books and supplementary materials should be representative of the cultural/racial diversity as well as the traditional and nontraditional roles open to all genders in today's society;
- persons with disabilities should be represented;
- diverse cultural/racial groups, genders and persons with disabilities should be represented in both active and passive roles;
- books and supplementary materials should be free of ethnocentric, sexist language or stereotypes which may make implications about persons or groups solely based upon their culture, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability;
- should explore the importance of curriculum skills in broadening career opportunities and enhancing future earning capacity;
- should support a student's right to form, identify and express his/her own opinions on controversial issues, as long as a balanced presentation is made of conflicting positions.

Parent Request for Title Restrictions

Parents may request that a specific print title be restricted from their own child. A parent may contact the school's librarian and the librarian will record the parent's request that a specific print title be restricted from their child. This will prevent the student from checking out a specific print book(s) from the school library. A parent can also request that a student's access to e-books be limited. A parent cannot request that a general category of print books be restricted.

Reconsideration of Materials

Objections to materials in the school library should be handled at the school level if possible. The reconsideration process includes the following steps:

1. If an individual has a complaint and the building administration/school librarian cannot resolve the issue, the administrator should invite the complainant to meet with the Director of Library Services.
2. If a complaint is in writing, the complaint should be acknowledged promptly, including an invitation to the complainant to conference with the librarian and Director of Library Services.
3. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, current parents, students, LPS staff members, and residents who live within the LPS boundaries may seek a "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials" form from the office of the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.
4. The materials will not be withdrawn while a decision is pending.
5. Upon receipt of the "Request for Reconsideration" form, the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning shall take appropriate action to see that the material is reviewed. If warranted, a meeting of a curriculum review advisory committee shall be called. Advisory committees will be formed one request at a time, according to the order in which the request is received.
6. Committee members shall review the material in advance of the meeting.
7. Committee members shall report their findings to the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.
8. Upon receiving the advisory committee's report, the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning shall make a decision, notify the complainant in writing, and explain the appeal process.
9. The decision of the Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning may be appealed to the President of the Board of Education. The appeal must be made in writing within 15 days of the Associate Superintendent's decision. The President of the Board of Education will refer the appeal to the District's Student Learning and Technology Committee. The Student Learning and Technology Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Education.
10. The decision of the Board of Education will be final.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Chris Haeffner, Director of Library Services for Lincoln Public Schools