

Boston Public Schools Vision Statement

A nation-leading, student-centered public school district providing an equitable, and excellent, well rounded education, that prepares every student for success in college, career, and life.

Boston Public Schools Library Services Vision Statement

The Boston Public Schools library program will provide all BPS students and school community members with physical and intellectual access to library materials, services, and space that nurture academic, social, professional, and personal growth. The school library program will be a diverse, inclusive environment that empowers its users to become accomplished readers, independent learners, critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and informed community members through the expertise of certified school librarians assisted by library paraprofessionals and the use of resources and services. The library will be a safe, comfortable space for students, staff, families, and community members to practice their rights to intellectual freedom and become agents of their own learning. The library will be recognized as the heart of the school community and as a place that encourages lifelong learning and the development of informed and responsible community members.

Boston Public Schools Mission Statement

Every child in every classroom in every school gets what they need.

Boston Public School Library Services Mission Statement

School libraries in BPS provide both the space and resources for the development of future ready individuals, who embody a lifelong love of reading, innovative thinking, competent research skills, and collaborative work relationships. The library space itself feels safe and inviting and encourages the love of reading, fellowship, and the exchange of ideas. The collection includes print and non-print materials that are up-to-date and represent the historical and cultural backgrounds of the entire school community. Patrons are provided access to a wide range of texts in various forms and reading levels that reflect the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity represented in the individual school community and the wider Boston area. Certified library teachers, assisted by library paraprofessionals, utilize a dynamic and responsive schedule, one that provides equitable access for all students, to:

- Collaborate with teachers to design and implement authentic learning experiences and research projects following the guided inquiry process that meet district goals, curriculum objectives, and the personal and academic developmental needs of all students
- Design in-depth, customized learning that integrates College, Career and Life Ready skills with classroom content
- Teach students to be responsible and ethical consumers and producers of information and creative works
- Provide opportunities for students to become global community members through collaboration, critical evaluation, and communication of information from many sources, including the Internet, subscription databases, and books in all formats
- Provide access to current technology and programs
- Develop programs that reach beyond the school building to bring ideas and resources to the community it serves
- Provide users with hands on experiences that help them problem solve, refine their ideas, and develop skills such as collaboration and persistence through the use of makerspaces
- Transform library spaces to enable changing models of learning.

I. Objectives

BPS school librarians guide students and collaborate with teachers by providing:

- in depth, personalized learning that integrates information literacy skills with classroom content;
- curated print and digital content for relevant student learning and teacher support;
- professional development;
- access to current technology and programs;
- access to physical spaces for individual and classes of students;
- and access to up-to-date, culturally relevant library collections both within and outside the school building, in the form of both physical items and digital resources.

II. Responsibility for Selection

The responsibility for the selection of all school library materials rests with the professionally trained and certified school librarians. During the selection process, the school librarian may pursue a collaborative effort involving administrators, teachers, students, and school librarians. The responsibility for finalizing the selection and purchase of library materials rests with the school librarians, who have professional training and experience in materials selection.

III. Materials Selection Policy

Materials are selected to serve the breadth of the curriculum at the school, to meet the needs and specific interests of students within a school, to reflect the characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences of students within the school, and to provide insights into other cultures and identities other than the students' so that they can understand, respect, and appreciate them. The school librarian strives to develop a collection that provides materials in a variety of formats and range of levels to meet the learning needs of all students within the school. The library program adheres to the Library Bill of Rights and the Access to Resources and Services in the School Library.

IV. Criteria for Selection

All resources, both physical and digital shall be judged by the following criteria:

- Readability and accessibility to intended audience
- Pertinent to the curriculum and the objectives of the school
- Factual content is accurate, current, reliable and authoritative
- Reflective of the pluralistic nature of a global society
- Free of bias and stereotype
- Representative of differing viewpoints on controversial subjects to enable students to develop necessary critical thinking skills to be discriminate users of information and productive members of society
- Appropriate format to effectively teach the curriculum
- Reflect current research and meet current standards of excellence
- The value of each work will be examined as a whole, transcending individual words, phrases, illustrations or incidents.

The following kinds of resources should be selected for the library:

- Materials integral to the instructional program.
- Materials appropriate for the reading level and understanding of students in the school.
- Materials reflecting the interests and needs of the students and faculty served by the library.
- Materials warranting inclusion in the collection because of their literary and/or artistic value and merit.
- Materials presenting information with the greatest degree of accuracy and clarity possible.
- Materials that encourage the enjoyment and pleasure of reading.

A. General Resources

In general, learning resources shall be selected for their strengths, rather than rejected for their weaknesses. A combination of the following criteria are used as a guide in selection.

- contribution to the curriculum and the instructional focus of the school;
- cultural relevance;
- linguistically sustaining;
- literary and artistic excellence;
- lasting importance or significance to a field of knowledge;
- relevance to the interests of students;
- favorable reviews found in standard selection sources;
- favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel, adults with special expertise, and students' suggestions;
- reputation and significance of the author, producer, and publisher;
- currency or timeliness of material;
- contribution to the breadth and diversity of representative viewpoints on controversial issues;
- contribution to multicultural and pluralistic awareness;
- high degree of potential user appeal;
- quality, durability, and variety of format;
- suitability of format and appearance for intended use;
- material is commensurate with cost and/or need.

B. Non-print Resources

Non-print resources include, but are not limited to video, streaming, DVDs, online databases, sound recordings, computer software, graphic materials, maps/globes, microforms, learning kits, games, transparencies, and archival materials that support the established learning goals of the Boston Public Schools libraries.

In selecting resources, each item should be considered for its merit and value in the collection. Materials will be previewed whenever possible before a determination for selection and purchase is made. Previously stated criteria for selection should be applied, with some additional considerations.

- availability and capability of existing and currently owned hardware to utilize the format;
- appropriateness of format;
- addresses instructional goals and supports curriculum taking into account learning styles, and the developmental abilities and adaptive technology needs of the students;
- ease of use and/or availability of training or customer support;
- sufficient documentation;
- licensing agreements;
- technical quality;
- accurate and reliable presentation of information.

C. Internet Resources

There are many Internet web and social media sites available that provide significant information, and supplement the resources of the school libraries. In selecting Internet sites it is important that the site be chosen for support of the goals of the educational community based on application of previously stated criteria. The following considerations should also be made:

- relevance to the curriculum and interests of the learning community;
- format accessible for the intended audience: the text is readable and graphics appropriate;
- ease of access;
- availability of equipment for viewing;
- sites developed by authoritative sources are preferred;
- accuracy and currency of information;
- favorable reviews when available;
- inclusion in recognized professional educational resources and collection development tools;
- extends the learning experience of the students or the instructional resources of the classroom teacher beyond available print and non-print resources in the school library.

D. Resource Selection Process

Requests and suggestions are sought from students, staff, parents, and other members of the school community. School librarians read current reviews from professional literature and other reviewing sources recognized for their expertise which are detailed in Appendix A. The selection process also includes the replacement of lost and worn materials and the removal of materials no longer current, applicable to curriculum, or containing stereotypes and biases. The disposal of these deselected materials shall be according to established guidelines listed in the section on Deselection of Materials.

E. Gift and Donation Policy

Gift materials, sponsored materials, and other donations, are evaluated by the same criteria as purchased materials. All gifts which are donated become property of the Boston Public Schools, and the school librarian will evaluate and decide, based on the selection criteria, to add to the collection or not. Gifts and donations, like purchased resources, will be removed from the collection at the end of their useful life, as discussed in Section VI.

V. Intellectual Freedom

The primary objective of the Boston Public Schools libraries is to implement, enrich, and support the educational program of the schools. In doing so, the library collection strives to provide a wide range of materials for all levels and areas of the curriculum, representing a diversity of appeal and different points of view.

To help both students and teachers develop a critical awareness of the problems and issues in our rapidly changing world, materials presenting all aspects of these problems and issues will be included, unpopular as well as popular, questionable as well as accepted, minority as well as majority opinions as developmentally appropriate.

The development of an individual's taste, judgment, critical thinking abilities, and life-long reading habits is to be encouraged. To that end, a considerable range of materials must be included in the library collection. Recreational reading, listening, and viewing contribute to this growth. Items for this purpose will be available along with those which are supportive of the curriculum.

This library materials selection policy is rooted in and supportive of the following documents:

- *The Constitution of the United States*, especially the *Bill of Rights*
- *The Students' Right to Read*, National Council of Teachers of English
- *The Freedom to Read*, American Library Association
- *The Freedom to View*, American Library Association
- *Library Bill of Rights*, American Library Association
- *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, American Library Association

The Boston Public Schools recognizes that the final decision as to what materials an individual student will use rests with that student's parents/caregivers. However, at no time will the wishes of one child's parents/caregivers to restrict their reading or viewing of a particular item infringe on other parents/caregivers' rights to permit their child to read or view the same material.

VI. Deselection of Materials: Weeding

In order to maintain the quality of the collection, librarians will annually conduct an inventory of the school library collection. During this time, the librarian will assess the collection to identify those items that are no longer relevant to the curriculum, of interest to students, or are in poor condition. These materials will be discarded, or weeded, from the collection following the CREW manual and using the MUSTIE guidelines. Materials which have been weeded will be donated to students, staff, and/or the organization More Than Words.

VII. Reconsideration Procedures

Occasionally objections to materials may be voiced despite the qualifications of the person making the selection for that library and the care taken in the selection process.

Any objections to materials in a specific school library can only be made by either a student, a parent/caregiver who has a child currently enrolled at that specific school, or an employee of that school. Each household may submit one (1) formal complaint at a time and no more than five (5) complaints per school year.

The procedure concerning complaints is outlined below. Its purpose is to provide for a space to determine appropriate action within the context of the principles of freedom of information, the students' right to access materials, and the professional responsibility and integrity of the school faculty. All materials will remain in circulation while the process of review is completed.

All complaints, both informal and formal, must first be handled by the school librarian. If there is no school librarian at the school, then the principal will assume the role of the school librarian during this procedure.

This process only refers to materials belonging to a specific Boston Public School library.

If a complaint is made, the school librarian will follow the following procedures:

1. Persons with a complaint about library resources should state their concerns to the school librarian. The librarian will listen attentively to the concerns and attempt to resolve the issue informally. As part of the discussion, the school employee will explain the library's selection policy, selection criteria, diversity of the collection with resources from many points of view, and the selection process. Each parent/caregiver has the right to determine the appropriateness of library resources for their children and should accord the same right to other families. The school librarian will log this conversation on the Informal Reconsideration form, to be shared with the Boston Public Schools Director of Libraries.
2. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the complainant shall be supplied with a packet of materials to complete in writing consisting of:
 - a. A letter addressing the complainant's concerns and outlining the procedure for addressing the issue;
 - b. The Boston Public Schools: *School Library Collection Development Policy*;
 - c. *Statement of Concern About a Library Resource*

3. The *Statement of Concern About a Library Resource* shall be completed and returned before further consideration will be given to the complaint. If the *Statement of Concern About a Library Resource* has not been received by the school librarian within 15 days of the date indicated on the letter to the complainant, the complaint shall be considered closed.
4. If the *Statement of Concern About a Library Resource* is completed and returned before or by the designated date, the following process will then be implemented:
 - a. While no questioned materials shall be removed from library circulation pending the reconsideration process, access to questioned materials may be denied to the child (or children) of the parent/caregiver making the complaint, if they so desire.
 - b. Upon receipt of a completed *Statement of Concern About a Library Resource* form, the librarian notifies the Director of Library Services
 - c. The BPS Director of Library Services will chair and convene a *Reconsideration Committee* to review the complaint within 15 days of receipt of the completed form.
 - d. The *Reconsideration Committee* shall consist of:
 - One parent/caregiver representative from the School Site Council of the involved school;
 - Two teachers—one whose academic content is associated with the challenged material;
 - BPS Director of Library Services;
 - School Leader from the school involved in the complaint;
 - School librarian from the school involved in the complaint;
 - A school librarian at large;
 - Should there be a conflict of interest, other representatives will be appointed by the Director;
 - A student from the level in which the challenged material resides (middle or high school level only);
 - A translator will be available for complainants who speak languages other than English.
5. The *Reconsideration Committee* shall include the following steps prior to the meeting.
 - All members will read, view, or listen to the challenged material.
 - Check general acceptance of the material through the reading of critical reviews and consulting recommended lists and collection development tools. Reviews and lists will be provided by Library Services.
 - Determine the extent to which the material adheres to the selection policy.

- Weigh merits against faults to form opinions based on the material as a whole, and not on passages isolated from context.
6. The *Reconsideration Committee* shall meet to discuss the material and determine if it conforms to the principles of selection outlined in the Boston Public Schools:
- *School Library Collection Development Policy*, following the guidelines outlined below:

INSTRUCTIONS TO EVALUATING COMMITTEE

Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to learn and to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is an essential ingredient of education in a democracy and part of the Boston Public Schools philosophy.

Read thoroughly all material referred to you, including available reviews and the full text of the challenged material. The general acceptance of the material could be checked by consulting standard evaluation sources and local holding in other schools. Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighted against each other and opinions based on the material as a whole. The goal is to help the complainant recognize the intrinsic value of the item, as learning resources are initially selected for their strengths, rather than rejected for their weaknesses.

Your report, representing both majority and minority opinions, will be presented by the Director of Library Services via a letter to the concerned individual at the conclusion of your discussion of the questioned material. Further, it will be presented to the School Committee through the Superintendent of Schools at a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting for their final review and action.

- The *Reconsideration Committee* shall prepare a written report on the challenged material containing their recommendations on the disposition of the matter.
- In answering the complainant, the *Committee* shall:
 - Explain the selection philosophy
 - Give the guidelines used for selection of the specific material under reconsideration
 - Cite authorities used in reaching the decision,
 - Make recommendations.

7. The *Reconsideration Committee* shall notify the complainant of their decision in writing, along with a formal written report and decision to the School Committee through the Superintendent of Schools, within two weeks of their meeting. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.
8. The school shall implement the committee's decision as stated in its report.
9. If the challenged library resource is retained, the school will not convene a Reconsideration Committee related to the same material for a period of five (5) years.

STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT A LIBRARY RESOURCE

Please return this form to the School Librarian. All fields must be complete in order to be considered a valid complaint. Any part of the form left incomplete renders the complaint void and will not be considered. All items must be read/viewed/listened to in full in order for the complaint to be considered. Complaints made solely on the race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion of an author and/or character in a library resource will not be considered. If more space is needed, please attach additional pages.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Address: _____ (street)
_____ (city) _____ (zip code)

Complainant represents (select one):

_____ themselves

_____ organization (if yes, please name) _____

_____ other group (if yes, please identify) _____

School library where material is located: _____

Do you have a child in this school? _____ (no) _____ (yes) _____ (grade level)

Title of item under consideration: _____

Author/Creator: _____

Year of publication/creation: _____

Resource type: ____ Book ____ Magazine ____ Newspaper ____ Audiovisual ____ Other

If other, please specify:

1. How did you learn about this material?

2. Did you read, view or listen to the entire item? _____(yes) _____(no)

3. What is the value and purpose of this item?

4. What positive qualities does the material present? _____

5. What age group or grade level would you recommend this material to?

6. What are your concerns about the material? Be specific, include citations and quotes

7. How has the material been assessed in professional review resources? Please provide citations.

8. In what ways does the material fail to comply with district and state educational objectives?

9. Who would be negatively impacted by this material and how? Please provide citations and evidence.

10. What resource(s) do you suggest to replace or provide additional coverage on this topic?
Please include specific titles along with professional reviews for those titles.

12. What would you prefer the school to do about this resource:

- ☐ Do not check item out or recommend it to my child
☐ Withdraw it from use by all students
☐ Reevaluate its current placement in the library

The complainant acknowledges that school library materials are selected to serve the breadth of the curriculum at the school, to meet the needs and specific interests of students within a school, to reflect the characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences of students within the school, and to provide insights into other cultures and identities other than the students' so that they can understand, respect, and appreciate them.

Signature of complainant: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A: Selection Resources

Professional associations offer a range of resources to consult for the selection of materials. However, selection and collection development resources are not limited or restricted to these listings.

A. Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices Resource Organizations

- American Library Association Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange
- Learning For Justice
- Teaching for Change
- We Need Diverse Books

B. Professional Review Resources

- Booklist
- Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
- Horn Book
- Kirkus Reviews
- Publisher's Weekly
- School Library Journal

C. Special Bibliographies: prepared by educational organizations for particular subject matter areas may also be utilized for collection development, including but not restricted to:

- *School Library Journal: Best Books of the Year*
- *Booklist: Editors Choice of the Year*
- *National Science Teaching Association: Outstanding Science Trade Books of the Year*
- *National Council for the Social Studies: Notable Social Studies Trade Books of the Year*
- *Children's Book Council: Favorites Awards*
- *Association for Library Services to Children: Notable Children's Books*
- *Association for Library Services to Children: Notable Children's Recordings*
- *Association for Library Services to Children: Notable Children's Digital Media*
- *Young Adult Library Services Association: Best Fiction for Young Adults*
- *Young Adult Library Services Association: Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers*
- *Young Adult Library Services Association: Amazing Audiobooks for Young Adults*
- *Young Adult Library Services Association: Great Graphic Novels for Teens*
- *Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books: Blue Ribbons*
- *Tech & Learning: Awards of Excellence*
- *National Council for Teachers of English: Notable Poetry Books and Verse Novels*

- *American Association of School Librarians: Best Digital Tools for Teaching and Learning*

D. Award Winning Books: awards presenting by educational organizations may be utilized for collection development, including by not restricted to:

- Alex Awards
- American Indian Youth Literature Awards
- Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature
- Boston Globe – Horn Book Awards
- Charlotte Huck Award
- Coretta Scott King Awards
- Excellence in Early Learning Digital Media
- John Newbery Medal
- Massachusetts Book Awards
- Massachusetts Children's Book Award
- Massachusetts Teen Choice Book Award
- Michael L. Printz Award
- Mildred L. Batchelder Award
- National Book Award
- Odyssey Award
- Orbis Pictus Award
- Pura Belpré Awards
- Randolph Caldecott Medal
- Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal
- Schneider Family Book Award
- Stonewall Book Awards
- Sydney Taylor Book Award
- Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal
- Walter Awards
- William C. Morris Award
- YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction
- and others.