



Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board

POLICY: LIBRARY MATERIALS - SELECTION CODE: PS-6


Origin: Pedagogical Services
Authority: Resolution #86-11-26-13.7
Reference(s):

POLICY STATEMENT

1. The primary objective of the school libraries of the EMSB shall be to implement, enrich and support the educational program of the schools. It shall be the function of a school library to provide a wide range of materials at all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal and with the presentations of different points of view.
2. Each school librarian or library technician shall be responsible for carrying out the following:
 - a. providing materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students (textbooks shall not be supplied by the library);
 - b. providing materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, authentic values and ethical standards;
 - c. providing materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young children may develop the practice of critical analysis of all media;
 - d. providing materials representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contribution to the Canadian mosaic;
 - e. providing recreational reading and viewing materials to meet student demand in leisure time;
 - f. placing principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to ensure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the school library.
3. The professionally trained librarian or library technician shall be responsible for coordinating the selection of instructional materials and making the recommendations for purchase.

4. The criterion to be considered first in the selection of library materials shall be the needs of the specific school and school community as defined by its curriculum, its existing collection and its student population. Other criteria for the purchase of library materials shall include the following:
 - a. overall purpose;
 - b. timeliness or permanence;
 - c. importance of the subject matter;
 - d. quality of the writing/production;
 - e. readability and popular appeal;
 - f. authoritativeness;
 - g. reputation of the publisher/producer;
 - h. reputation and significance of the author/artist/composer/producer, etc.;
 - i. format and price.

Requests from staff and students shall also be considered.

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PURPOSE

To describe the procedures for selecting library materials and for resolving disputes should the public have any objections regarding the selection of materials.

PROCEDURE

In selecting materials for purchase, the librarian or library technician performs the following:

1. evaluates the existing collection;
2. consults any Board policies or recommendations of the Anti-Bias Committee;
3. consults reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids (e.g. Booklist, Canadian Materials, School Library Journal, Quill and Quire, etc.);
4. consults members of teaching staff and administration;
5. may make selections based on personal knowledge of materials even though these have not been reviewed.

In specific areas, the librarian/library technician uses these procedures:

1. Gift materials are judged by basic selection standards and are accepted or rejected based on these standards.
2. Multiple items of outstanding and much-in-demand media are purchased as needed.

3. Worn or missing standard items are replaced periodically.
4. Out-of-date or no longer useful materials are withdrawn from the collection.
5. Materials acquired by subscription are examined carefully, and are purchased only to fill a definite need.

Challenged Materials

In cases where the public challenges selected materials, the principles of the freedom to read and of the professional responsibility of the staff shall be defended, rather than the materials.

If the matter cannot be resolved in conference involving the principal, complainant and personnel, such as the school librarian/library technician, the steps listed below shall be taken:

1. School personnel shall be courteous, but make no commitments.
2. The complainant may be invited to file objections on the attached questionnaire (Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials) and forward it to the principal of the school in question (Appendix A).
3. School personnel shall determine whether materials may be sufficiently in question to warrant immediate withdrawal of the material, pending a decision of the principal after consultation with the librarian/library technician, and critical reviews and/or evaluations of the item in question should be consulted.
4. The personnel (including the principal, librarian/library technician and, if indicated, the appropriate subject teacher) shall:
 - a. examine the material(s);
 - b. weigh values and faults against each other and form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages pulled out of context;
 - c. meet to discuss the material and to prepare a report on it.
5. If the matter cannot be resolved at any of the preceding levels, all relevant materials shall be forwarded to the Regional Director.

Guiding Principles

1. Although it is library materials which are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read/listen/view shall be defended as well. (See 'Statement on Intellectual Freedom', Canadian Library Association – Appendix B)
2. Access to challenged material shall not necessarily be restricted during the reconsideration process.
3. No parent has the right to determine reading, viewing or listening matter for students other than his/her own children.
4. A decision to sustain a challenge shall not necessarily be interpreted as a judgment of irresponsibility on the part of the professionals involved in the original selection and/or use of the material.

APPENDIX A



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REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Please complete and return to the principal.

Title: _____

Author: _____

Publisher: _____

Request initiated by: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Complainant represents:

Self: _____

Organization:(specify name) _____

Identify any other group: _____

Why do you object to this material?

What do you think might be the result of reading this material?

For what group would you recommend this material?

What are the good qualities of this material?

APPENDIX B

Canadian Library Association

Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom¹

All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's *Bill of Rights* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom under the law is essential to the health and development of Canadian society.

Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.

Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.

Approved by Canadian Library Association Council on June 27, 1974, and amended on November 17, 1983 and on November 18, 1985.

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