

Collection Development Policy

Resolution

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

June 24, 1981

Resolution 1981-32

Re: Public Libraries

Book Selection Policy

WHEREAS, The freedom to read is essential to our democracy;

And

WHEREAS, Public libraries have a responsibility to make available to the public books and other material offering the widest diversity of knowledge and ideas, views and expressions, so that citizens may choose freely from among a broad range of conflicting ideas; and

WHEREAS, It is in the public interest for libraries to reaffirm this principle in policies and procedures for the selection of library material and for dealing with complaints and requests for the removal of material by individuals or groups; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education endorses the Freedom to Read principle and requires boards of library trustees of each public library system to adopt policies that will affirm and guide the effective implementation of this principle, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board directs the Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries to provide assistance to libraries and to report the result to the Board by June, 1982.

Section I: Philosophy of Collection Development

The residents of Somerset County support the Somerset County Library System with their tax payments and their patronage. The Library endeavors to provide materials and services to meet the recreational, informational and education needs of Somerset County citizens effectively, courteously and equally. This document sets forth the guidelines by which the contents of the Somerset County Library System's collection are determined.

The Somerset County Board of Library Trustees and the staff of the Somerset County Library System endorse the Freedom to Read, the Freedom to View and the Library Bill of Rights as adopted, amended and interpreted by the American Library Association Council.

The Library sets the following goals for service in compliance with these documents:

To serve Somerset County residents regardless of age, background, interests, abilities, origin or education and,

To develop the Library collection with flexibility, open-mindedness, and responsiveness to the community's changing needs.

The Library will select, organize and make accessible materials and other resources for the interest, information and enlightenment of all county residents. Those items which the Library is unable to provide through its collection will be requested through the network services of the Eastern Shore Regional Library or other libraries.

See Appendices:

Appendix A: Freedom to Read

Appendix B: Freedom to View

Appendix C: Library Bill of Rights

Section 2: Responsibility for Selection

The Somerset County Board of Library Trustees delegates to the Library Director the authority to interpret and guide the application of this collection development policy. The Director may authorize other qualified staff members to apply this policy in building location collections. While it is the responsibility of the qualified librarian to select and discard materials, it is recognized that limitations of budget, space and individual knowledge may exist. Suggestions from community members, trustees, or authorities on special subjects are welcomed. Final choices of materials, however, must rest with the Director, based on the needs of the community and the collection.

Section 3: Criteria for Selection

When making decisions to acquire or discard library materials no item can be indisputably accepted or rejected by any one established standard. The following general criteria will be consulted as guidelines in selecting materials for inclusion in the Library's collection:

- Relevance to informational, recreational and educational needs of the community
- Relationship to existing material in the collection on the same topic
- Critics' and staff's reviews
- Authority and competence of the author
- Clarity and accuracy of presentation
- Public demand
- Suitability of style and reading level for the intended audience

The Library may be restricted by limited demand, budget, or space from providing materials on every topic. However, the purposes, resources and loan services of the Eastern Shore Regional Library and the State Library Resource Center are recognized and will be called upon to supply to local patrons those items beyond Library scope and budget.

The Library acknowledges an interest in Somerset County history and attempts to provide a limited collection of such materials. In addition, the educational, cultural, commercial and civic enterprises of individual communities will not be ignored when considering materials for inclusion in the Library collection.

The Somerset County Library System recognizes its special role in the community libraries to serve as both public libraries and school media centers. While the school system retains primary responsibility for the needs of the school audience, the public library will attempt to provide supplementary materials to assist students and teachers in their endeavors. Provision of such materials is also the policy in the county's non-school based library branches.

Selection criteria apply equally to all formats of library materials. Books, newspapers, paperbacks, magazines, pamphlets, films, recordings, and any new types of materials are acquired and made accessible as they are judged suitable, meaningful, and relevant to the collection, and as budget and space permit.

Responsibility for the reading done by children rests with their parents and guardians. Previously stated selection criteria apply to all children's materials. The Library Board of Trustees and staff fully support the Free Access to Libraries for Minors as interpreted from the Library Bill of Rights.

See Appendices:

Appendix D: Free Access to Libraries for Minors

Appendix E: Sexism, Racism and Other "Isms" in Library Materials

Section 4: Collection Maintenance

The Somerset County Library System attempts to provide a flexible, responsive and broad collection of materials for the interests, information and enlightenment of all county residents. New materials are added on a continuing basis in compliance with the criteria set forth in this document. Materials initially considered not to fit the selection criteria, may later be reconsidered and included in the collection.

Also, materials are withdrawn regularly from the Library collection. The following criteria are consulted when considering materials for withdrawal:

- Severely outdated and misleading information
- Duplicate copies in excess of current demand
- Worn or damaged copies
- Materials no longer in sufficient demand
- Space limitations (Revised Dec. 13, 2006 at Board of Trustees Meeting)

Replacement of a lost or withdrawn item with an identical title is determined by the existence of adequate materials in the current collection on the same topic, availability of more current and accurate information, or continued demand for the specific title.

Undamaged materials withdrawn from the Library collection will be sold at sales as designated by the Board of Library Trustees or will be donated to other agencies (e.g., Somerset County Headstart).

The Library accepts with appreciation, gifts of books and other library materials, but reserves the right to evaluate and use or dispose of such gifts in accordance with the criteria stated in this document. No conditions may be imposed relating to the gifts. Magazines entered in the name of the Library and arriving free without prior arrangement are generally discarded as received. In gift books, a plate giving the name of the donor and the person remembered will be mounted upon request.

The Library System cannot accept responsibility for assigning value to donations of materials for tax purposes. Such valuation must be done by a book dealer at the donor's expense if an official tax statement is required.

See Appendices:

Appendix F: State on Labeling

Appendix G: Restricted Access to Library Materials

Appendix H: Reevaluating Library Collections

Section 5: Reconsideration

A patron's selection of library materials for personal use is a purely individual matter. The Library strives to provide materials representative of the broad spectrum of views inherent in

a democratic society. While a person may reject materials on an individual basis, no one may exercise censorship to restrict access to those same materials by others. Library materials will not be removed from the collection when censorship is involved except under the orders of a court of competent jurisdiction.

A patron expressing disagreement with the inclusion or exclusion of a specific title in the Library's collection will receive a courteous hearing from library staff or Board members. A copy of this document will be offered and explained to the patron. The opportunity to speak with the Library Director will also be offered. If the patron wishes reconsideration of the material based on the interpretation of the collection development policy, a Request for Reconsideration form will be given to the patron. This form should be completed and returned to the Library Director. The Director will respond to a written request within ten business days. If the action taken by the Director is not satisfactory, the patron may request reconsideration by the Board of Library Trustees.

See Appendices:

Appendix I: Resolution on Challenged Materials

Appendix J: Request for Reconsideration Form