

Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The school library media program plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shape the resources and services of a school library media program, the principles of the Library Bill of Rights apply equally to all libraries, including school library media programs. Under these principles, all students have equitable access to library facilities, resources, and instructional programs.

School library media specialists assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry. School library media specialists work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Intellectual freedom is fostered by educating students in the use of critical thinking skills to empower them to pursue free inquiry responsibly and independently. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society.

School library media specialists cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources that meet the needs as well as the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources that support the mission of the school district and are consistent with its philosophy, goals, and objectives. Resources in school library media collections are an integral component of the curriculum and represent diverse points of view on both current and historical issues. These resources include materials that support the intellectual growth, personal development, individual interests, and recreational needs of students.

While English is, by history and tradition, the customary language of the United States, the languages in use in any given community may vary. Schools serving communities in which other languages are used make efforts to accommodate the needs of students for whom English is a second language. To support these efforts, and to ensure equitable access to resources and services, the school library media program provides resources that reflect the linguistic pluralism of the community.

Members of the school community involved in the collection development process employ educational criteria to select resources unfettered by their personal, political, social, or religious views. Students and educators served by the school library media program have access to resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval. School library media specialists resist efforts by individuals or groups

to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, hear, or access via electronic means.

Major barriers between students and resources include but are not limited to imposing age, grade-level, or reading-level restrictions on the use of resources; limiting the use of interlibrary loan and access to electronic information; charging fees for information in specific formats; requiring permission from parents or teachers; establishing restricted shelves or closed collections; and labeling. Policies, procedures, and rules related to the use of resources and services support free and open access to information.

It is the responsibility of the governing board to adopt policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. It is the responsibility of school library media specialists to implement district policies and procedures in the school to ensure equitable access to resources and services for all students.

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Selection of Library Resources Philosophy

Library resources are selected by the school district to implement, enrich, and support the educational program for the student. Resources must serve both the breadth of the curriculum and the needs and interests of individual students. The district is obligated to provide for a wide range of abilities and to respect the diversity of many differing points of view. To this end, principles must be placed above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of resources of the highest quality and appropriateness.

The Baldwin County School Board delegates the authority and responsibility for the selection of all library resources to the superintendent of schools. The appropriate professional personnel in consultation with administration and faculty shall initially select resources for school libraries. Decisions on purchases will be the responsibility of the building Principal and, if necessary, can be reviewed by the superintendent. The superintendent's review may be for the purpose of ensuring that an age appropriate balance of materials is selected.

Internet resources are not subject to this policy. The internet is largely unregulated, and not all of the information it carries is suitable for schoolchildren. Although the district subscribes to a filtering service that blocks much inappropriate material, the Technology Use Policy and the Guidelines for Acceptable Use of the Internet represent an understanding on the part of the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) that the Baldwin County School District does not control the contents of the internet.

Any resident or employee of the Baldwin County School District may formally challenge library resources on the basis of appropriateness. This shall also be done through administrative procedure.

Reconsideration of Library Resources Policy

The School Board affirms the right of parents to restrict their child's access to resources they deem inappropriate. The Board further affirms that no parent has the right to make that decision on behalf of other children.

Any resident or employee of the Baldwin County School District may formally challenge library resources on the basis of appropriateness. This shall be done through the district's Reconsideration of Library Resources procedure, which includes:

- ❖ a meeting with the building principal who will hear the complaint and explain the reconsideration process
 - ❖ completion (by the complainant) of the appropriate Request for Reconsideration form
 - ❖ formation of a committee to re-evaluate the item challenged materials; the committee shall include but not be limited to building administrators, classroom teachers, and librarians
 - ❖ preparation and submission of a report outlining the decision of the Reconsideration Committee
 - ❖ opportunity to appeal the decision to the superintendent and thereafter to the School Board
 - ❖ during the process, the library resources will remain in use unless the committee votes to remove or restrict the resource until a final decision is made.
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Reconsideration of Library Resources Procedure Baldwin County School District

Informal Reconsideration

- ❖ Persons wishing to make a complaint regarding library resources will be asked to bring their complaint to the principal or the librarian.
- ❖ Internet resources are not subject to reconsideration under these guidelines. The internet is largely unregulated, and not all of the information it carries is suitable for schoolchildren. Although the district subscribes to a filtering service that blocks much inappropriate material, the Technology Use Policy and the Guidelines for Acceptable Use of the Internet represent an understanding on the part of the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) that the Baldwin County School District does not control the contents of the internet.
- ❖ Upon meeting with the complainant, the principal or librarian will first attempt to resolve the issue informally.
 1. The identity of the complainant shall remain confidential during the informal process (only).
 2. Commitments should not be made until the issue has been thoroughly explored.
 3. The complaint should be treated in a courteous, objective and unemotional manner.
 4. The principal or librarian will listen to all concerns, and try to resolve the issue informally. This might include explaining the library's selection procedures and criteria, the intended audience and educational uses of the item in question, or relevant sections of the American Library Association's Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program.
 5. If the complainant then wishes to proceed with a formal request for reconsideration, the principal will follow up the discussion with a letter. The letter will include:
 - the Guidelines for the Selection of Library Resources and Collection Development Plan for the appropriate school library
 - the ALA's Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program
 - the Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form
 6. In the event that the complainant is the principal, the superintendent of schools will perform the role of the principal in the above process.

Formal Reconsideration

- ❖ In the event of a formal request for reconsideration, these steps will be taken:
 1. Persons wishing to make a formal request for reconsideration must complete the Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form and submit it to the principal; in the event that more than one item is involved, a separate form must be completed for each item.
 2. The superintendent of schools will be informed of the request for formal reconsideration.
 3. The school's reconsideration committee will convene to reevaluate the material(s) in question.

- ❖ Reconsideration Committee
 1. Upon receipt of a completed Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form, the principal will:
 - a. Appoint a reconsideration committee, to include the following members:
 - building level administrator
 - one member of the school teaching staff of the appropriate subject or grade level
 - the school's certified librarian
 - one member of the community
 - one member of the student body (if challenged material is at the Middle or High school level)
 - b. Name a chairperson of the consideration committee.
 - c. Arrange for a meeting of the reconsideration committee to take place within 10 working days after the principal receives the complaint.
 2. The reconsideration committee is charged with a thorough review of the challenged resource, and will decide whether or not it conforms to the principles of selection as outlined in the Guidelines for the Selection of Library Resources and other applicable policies and guidelines.
 3. The reconsideration committee may also consult other district staff and/or community members who have relevant expertise.

❖ Guiding principles

1. Any resident or employee of the school district may raise objection to library resources, despite the fact that the individuals who selected them were qualified to make the selection, followed the proper procedure, and observed the criteria for selecting library resources.
2. The principal should periodically review district policies on Selection and Reconsideration of Library Resources and Guidelines for the Selection of Library Resources with all staff members.
3. The Baldwin County School District supports the American Library Association's Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program, a copy of which is attached to this document. When library resources are reconsidered, the importance of the freedom to read/view/listen will be considered.
4. No parent has the right to control the reading, viewing, or listening materials of other people's children.
5. The item(s) in question will remain in circulation throughout the review process.
6. The major task before the reconsideration committee is to determine the appropriateness of the material in question for its intended educational use.

❖ Resolution

1. Members of the reconsideration committee shall:
 - a. Examine the district's Reconsideration of Library Resources policy and the Guidelines for the Selection of Library Resources
 - b. Examine the Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources form
 - c. Read and evaluate the item(s) in question
 - d. Read reviews of the item(s) in question
 - e. Discuss the challenged material in the context of the educational program and intended audience for which it was selected
 - f. Form opinions based on the resource as a whole, not on passages or selections taken out of context
 - g. Discuss the challenged item(s) with the complainant as needed
 - h. Reach a decision:
 - to retain the item,
 - to retain the item with specific restrictions, or
 - to remove the item
 - i. Complete the Report on the Reconsideration of Library Resource form within 15 working days of the first meeting
2. The chairperson of the Reconsideration Committee will discuss and file the report with the principal, who will forward a copy to the superintendent of schools.

3. The principal will send a copy of the report to the complainant, and will discuss the report further, if requested.
 4. The principal will also send copies of the report to members of the Reconsideration Committee.
 5. The complainant shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Reconsideration Committee first to the superintendent of schools and then to the School Board.
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Request for Reconsideration of Library Resources

Your name: _____

Street address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Relationship to student and/or school: _____

Do you represent:

Yourself?

An organization or group? Specify: _____

RESOURCE ON WHICH YOU ARE COMMENTING

Title: _____

Author/Producer: _____ Copyright date: _____

Format of resource:

book

video / DVD

magazine

cassette / CD

newspaper

other: _____

1. What brought this resource to your attention?

2. Have you examined (read, viewed, listened to) the *entire* resource?

Yes

No

3. What do you understand to be the theme or purpose of this material?

4. Have you read any reviews of this book? If so, who wrote the review?

5. What concerns you about this resource? (Please be specific: cite words, pages, scenes, etc.) Attach additional sheets if necessary.

6. What do you feel might be the result of a student using this material?

7. For what age group would you recommend this material?

8. Is there anything good in this material? Please comment.

9. What is your recommendation concerning this material?

10. Are there other resources you would suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

SIGNATURE

DATE

*Please return the completed form to the school Principal.
A Report by the Reconsideration Committee will be available within 15 working days of the
first meeting regarding this request*

Report on the Reconsideration of Library Resources

Date: _____

Review requested by: _____

Phone: _____

Reconsideration Committee members

Chairperson: _____

Building level administrator: _____

Teaching representative: _____

Certified librarian: _____

Community representative: _____

Student representative: _____

Other representative: _____

Meeting dates: _____

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE

Please bear in mind the principles of *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program*, and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. Freedom of inquiry is vital to education in a democracy.

Study all materials referred to you, and read available reviews. The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and local holdings in other schools.

Passages or parts of the resource should not be considered out of context. Virtues and faults should be weighed against each other, and your opinions should be based on the material as a whole.

Bear in mind that your report, containing both majority and minority opinions as applicable, will be presented to the complainant by the principal at the conclusion of your work.

ITEM FOR REVIEW

Title: _____

Author/Producer: _____ Copyright date: _____

Format of resource:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> book | <input type="checkbox"/> video / DVD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> magazine | <input type="checkbox"/> cassette / CD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ |

DECISION OF THE RECONSIDERATION COMMITTEE

For the reasons stated above, we believe that the item in question should be

- removed
- retained
- retained with this restriction

Majority opinion:
(Please summarize the key factors in your decision.)

Minority opinion:
(If the committee was significantly divided, please summarize the minority opinion.)

Signatures:

Chairperson: _____

Building level administrator: _____

Teaching representative: _____

Certified librarian: _____

Community representative: _____

Student representative: _____

Other representative: _____

Date: _____

Guidelines for the Selection of Library Resources

Baldwin County School District

Objectives of Selection

The library provides resources that implement, support and enrich the school curriculum. Library resources are chosen to provide users with a wide range of educational materials, at appropriate levels of difficulty and in a variety of formats, which reflect diversity of appeal and allow for the presentation of differing points of view.

Responsibility for Selection of Library Resources

Since the selection of library resources often involves many people (administrators, librarians, teachers, instructional assistants, students, parents, community members), the responsibility for coordinating the selection of library resources and for making recommendation to purchase rests with the certified librarian.

Criteria for Selection of Library Resources

- A. Library resources will be chosen to support the mission and the academic, social and civic expectations of the Baldwin County Schools; the mission, philosophy, guiding principles and annual goals of the Baldwin County School District; and the standards and frameworks of the State of Alabama.
- B. Library resources will be chosen to support the existing curriculum, as well as the personal needs and interests of library users.
- C. Library resources will meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation.
- D. Library resources will be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning style, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected.
- E. Library resources will be selected to help students gain an awareness of our pluralistic society.
- F. The selection of library resources on controversial issues will be directed toward maintaining a diverse collection representing various views.
- G. Library resources will be selected for their strengths rather than rejected for their weaknesses.

Procedures for Selection of Library Resources

- A. In selecting library resources, the librarian will measure available materials against the above criteria, the emerging needs of the curriculum, and the library's current Collection Development Plan.
 - B. The librarian will consult reputable, professionally prepared selection guides and other appropriate review sources. Such sources include-but are not limited to-American Historical Fiction, Booklist, Children's Library Catalog, Junior High School Library Catalog, Kirkus Reviews, Reference Books for School Libraries, School Library Journal, Senior High School Library Catalog, etc.
 - C. Administrators, teachers, instructional assistants, students, parents and community members will be regularly encouraged to make recommendations for purchase.
 - D. When feasible, the resource itself will be examined.
 - E. Gift materials will be measured against the above criteria, and will be accepted or rejected accordingly. Gifts will only be accepted if there are no strings attached. Gifts that are not added to the collection will be donated to a local charity.
 - F. Resource selection will include the routine removal of outdated and inaccurate materials, as well as the replacement of lost and worn items still of educational value.
-

Collection Depth Levels of Section 599.5: Whales & Dolphins

Current Depth Level of 599.5:	74 Titles
RLG Conspectus level:	Instructional Support
Desired Depth Level of 599.5:	80 Titles
RLG Conspectus level:	Instructional Support

Baldwin County Public School System Copyright Policy

The Baldwin County Public School System acknowledges that federal law states that it is illegal to duplicate copyrighted materials without authorization of the holder of the copyright, except for certain exempt purposes. Penalties may be imposed for unauthorized copying of audiovisual or printed materials, and computer software, unless the copying or using conforms to the "fair use" doctrine. The Baldwin County School System encourages its staff to share learning by making proper use of supplementary materials. Copyright and the notion of intellectual property was written into the Constitution of the United States to promote learning and the useful arts and was designed to be supportive of the work of educators. It is the responsibility of the employees of the Baldwin County School System to abide by the copying procedures and obey the requirements as set by the law. Copyright requirements should not be violated in order for employees to perform their duties.