

Instruction

Selection of Library Media Resources

The Newtown Board of Education (the “Board”) is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of its schools, including the library media centers. The Board delegates to the Superintendent of Schools the authority and responsibility for library materials in all formats. Responsibility for selection and maintenance of library materials rests with professionally trained library personnel (“library media specialists”) acting under the supervision of the building administrator, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent, using the Board’s selection and weeding criteria and procedures as described in this policy.

Selection Criteria

The Board has developed library media materials selection criteria with the following goals:

- To implement the educational goals and instructional objectives of the Newtown Public Schools (the “District”);
- To assist library media specialists in the selection of library materials;
- To inform the public about criteria upon which library selections are made;
- To maintain a well-balanced and broad collection of materials for information, reference, and research;
- To represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues;
- To provide a diverse collection that contains content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories and experiences;
- To promote critical thinking and a love of lifelong learning by offering students a wide array of print and non-print materials; and
- To provide recreational media resources.

Selection of library media materials will be based upon consideration of the following:

- Relevancy or permanent value;
- Accuracy;
- Readability;
- Clear presentation and format;
- Educational significance;
- Need and value to the collection;
- Such other resources, including recommended reading lists, as determined by the library media specialists; and
- Age appropriateness, in alignment with existing, Board-approved curricula, for:
 - Elementary (grades PK-4, generally ages 0-10);
 - Intermediate (grades 5-6, generally ages 10-12);
 - Middle School (grades 7-8, generally ages 12-13); and
 - High School (grades 9-12, generally ages 13-17).

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In evaluating age appropriateness, the following criteria will apply:

- Recommendations set forth by the following organizations (“Library Review Resources”) will be consulted when determining age appropriateness, including but not limited to:
 - School Library Journal
 - Kirkus
 - Booklist
 - Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults
 - Common Sense Media
 - Follett Titlewave
- If there is agreement as to age appropriateness from at least two Library Review Resources and the material under consideration aligns with District curricular offerings for the relevant school level (*i.e.*, elementary, intermediate, middle, or high school), then the library media specialist may follow the age appropriateness recommendation of the Library Review Resources.
- In the event that there is no requisite agreement among Library Review Resources about the age appropriateness of the material, the building administrator will determine the age appropriateness in consultation with the Assistant Superintendent.
- In the event that library materials are not rated by the Library Review Resources (*e.g.*, if they are newly published or classics), the library media specialist will conduct an examination of the book and make a recommendation, including a rationale, to the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent for determination as to whether to include the material in the school library collection at that school (“School Library Collection”).
- Finally, if the material under consideration contains graphic and/or excessive violence, explicit sexual content, excessive use of expletives, or hate speech, then the library media specialist shall follow the process outlined below.

The Board believes that school library media materials that (1) contain graphic and/or excessive violence, explicit sexual content, excessive use of expletives, or hate speech, and (2) lack overall literary or educational merit should not be included in the District’s library media centers. If, based on the overall literary or educational merit of a particular resource, the library media specialist determines it is appropriate to include in the School Library Collection material containing graphic and/or excessive violence, explicit sexual content, excessive use of expletives, or hate speech, the library media specialist will conduct an examination of the material and prepare a written rationale for selection. The rationale for selection will then be presented to the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent to determine whether to include the material in the School Library Collection. If, after reviewing the material and the proposed rationale, the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent decide that inclusion

in the school library is appropriate, the rationale will be approved (with or without revision) and will remain on record with the school (“Rationale for Selection”).

Gifts and Donated Materials

Gifts or donated materials will be subject to the same selection criteria as purchased materials. Gifted or donated materials will only be accepted after being reviewed by District staff in accordance with the

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above selection procedures. If the gifted or donated material does not meet the criteria identified above, it will not be placed in the school library collection.

Collection Maintenance and Weeding

Library media specialists will conduct an inventory of the School Library Collection and equipment on an ongoing basis. The inventory can be used to determine losses and remove damaged or worn materials that can then be considered for replacement.

Library media specialists will engage in systematic inspection of materials that may result in weeding in accordance with this policy. Considerations for weeding shall include but are not limited to:

- Worn and damaged materials,
- Superseded editions,
- Unnecessary duplications (based on circulation),
- Material that is factually inaccurate,
- Age appropriateness (as described above), and/or
- Materials that have had little to no circulation over an extended period of time.

Book Reconsideration Requests

The Board acknowledges that, despite the care taken to select library media resources, occasional requests to reconsider a library media selection (“Material for Reconsideration”) may be made by a parent and/or guardian of a student enrolled in Newtown Public Schools (“Requestor”). Such requests should be referred to the library media specialist of the school in which the library media material is housed using the Initial Reconsideration Request form. The Material for Reconsideration will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process.

Initial Reconsideration Request

Upon receiving an Initial Reconsideration Request form, the library media specialist will notify the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent and, then, conduct an examination of the material to determine whether or not it meets the selection criteria as set forth above (“Selection Criteria”). Additionally, the library media specialist will notify the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent of the outcome of any reconsideration requests. Requests will be addressed in the order in which they are received and in accordance with the time frames established below, provided that such time frames may be reasonably extended based on the number of pending requests at any given time and/or other extenuating circumstances.

- If the library media specialist determines that the Material for Reconsideration does not meet the Selection Criteria, then it will be removed from the School Library Collection and the Requestor will be notified of this decision within ten (10) school days of the original request.
- If the library media specialist determines that the Material for Reconsideration meets the Selection Criteria and will therefore be retained in the School Library Collection, the Requestor will be notified of this decision within ten (10) school days of the original request.
- If the Material for Reconsideration contains graphic and/or excessive violence, explicit sexual content, excessive use of expletives, or hate speech, and has been retained on the basis of the material’s overall literary or educational merit pursuant to a previously approved Rationale for Selection, then upon notification that the material will be retained in the School Library Collection, the library media specialist will also provide the Requestor with a copy of the previously approved Rationale for Selection for such library material.
- If the Material for Reconsideration contains graphic and/or excessive violence, explicit sexual

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content, excessive use of expletives, or hate speech, but the Material for Reconsideration does not have a previously approved Rationale for Selection and the library media specialist determines that it should continue to be included in the School Library Collection based on its overall literary or educational merit, then the library media specialist will conduct an examination of the material, prepare a written rationale for selection, and present it to the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent for their review within five (5) school days of the original request. Within ten (10) school days of receiving the rationale, the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent will review both the material and the rationale to determine whether or not the library material shall remain in the School Library Collection. If the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent decide that inclusion in the School Library Collection is appropriate, the rationale will be approved (with or without revision) and will remain on record with the school. The Requestor will be notified of this decision within fifteen (15) school days of the original request and provided with a copy of the approved Rationale for Selection. If the building administrator and Assistant Superintendent determine that the rationale does not sufficiently support the inclusion of such material in the School Library Collection, the Material for Reconsideration will be removed from the School Library Collection, and the Requestor will be notified of this decision within fifteen (15) school days of the original request.

Final Reconsideration Request

If, after the process outlined above is complete, it has been determined that the Material for Reconsideration shall remain in the School Library Collection, the Requestor may choose to submit a Final Reconsideration Request form to the Superintendent. Within ten (10) school days of receiving the written request, the Superintendent will consult with stakeholders from the school community, including appropriate school staff, the Requester and other parent/guardian representation, as appropriate, to fairly and fully evaluate the decision to retain the Material for Reconsideration subject to the Final Reconsideration Request. The

Superintendent will review relevant information pertaining to the request in order to make a final determination as to whether the Material for Reconsideration should be retained in the School Library Collection (the school library in which it is housed), moved to a different level (e.g., from the middle school to the high school), or removed from the District's library circulation entirely. This decision will be communicated in writing to the Requestor, the Assistant Superintendent, the building administrator and library media specialist within fifteen (15) school days of receiving the Final Reconsideration Request form, provided that such time frame may be reasonably extended based on the number of pending requests at any given time and/or other extenuating circumstances. The Superintendent will report to the Board any decisions resulting from Final Reconsideration Requests.

Documentation of Rationales for Selection, Reconsideration Requests and Determinations

Each library media specialist shall create and maintain a list of library material resources that (1) contain graphic and/or excessive violence, explicit sexual content, excessive use of expletives, or hate speech and (2) have an approved an Rationale for Selection. The list, along with the approved Rationales for Selection, shall periodically distributed to parents and/or guardians and shall be available upon request.

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Each library media specialist shall also create and maintain a log of reconsideration requests, which shall include, as to each Material for Reconsideration:

- 1) the name and author/creator of the Material for Reconsideration,
- 2) the date of the Initial Reconsideration Request and the Final Reconsideration Request (if any),
- 3) the outcome of the reconsideration request(s) (e.g., whether the material was retained, removed, or moved to another school), and
- 4) the date of resolution.

This log shall be periodically distributed to parents and/or guardians and shall be available upon request.

The District will not be required to entertain reconsideration requests as to any particular Material for Reconsideration for which a determination has been made (in response to an Initial and/or Final Reconsideration Request) within the previous five (5) years.

Library Media Resource Restriction Requests

The Board values its partnership with parents and guardians. As such, each parent/guardian may determine the appropriateness of library resource materials for their children and should afford the same right to other families. Parents/guardians who want to restrict their children's access to specific library media materials can submit the NPS Library Media Resource Restriction form to the library media specialist of the school in which their child is enrolled. Requests that library materials concerning general topics or themes will be restricted will not be honored. Parents who choose this option are expected to let their child know, in advance, that there are some materials they may not be allowed to check out from the library.

The Board authorizes the administration to develop Administrative Regulations in furtherance of this policy.

Instruction

Procedures for Library Media Restrictions and Reconsideration of Library Media Materials

Guiding Principles:

- Parents and/or guardians have the right to determine what library media materials their child(ren) has(have) access to and may choose to restrict access to certain library materials from them.
- The library media specialists selecting library materials are duly qualified to make such selections and will follow the proper procedures set forth in this policy.
- Collaborative conversations between library media specialists, administrators and parents are essential to building and maintaining strong home-school connections and should always be the first option when managing parent and/or guardian concerns.
- The principal will review the selection criteria and reconsideration process with the library media staff annually.
- When library media materials are challenged, the principles of the freedom to read/listen/view must be defended as well.
- Access to library media materials will not be restricted during the reconsideration process.
- Any decision to remove library media materials does not necessarily reflect negatively on the professional judgment involved in the original selection and/or use of the materials.

Library Media Resource Restriction Requests

Parents/guardians who want to restrict their child from checking out certain library media print materials can complete the NPS Library Media Resource Restriction form. All such forms will be subject to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) which protects the privacy of student educational records and cannot be disclosed to outside parties.

Instructions:

1. No more than 15 specific titles per child may be requested for restriction.
2. If there are more than 15 specific titles that you would like restricted from your child, you must schedule a meeting with the building principal and library media specialist to discuss other possible options. Forms with more than 15 titles will not be accepted.
3. A separate form must be completed for each child.
4. Before submitting this form, please verify that the title you are requesting for restriction is part of the collection of your child's school library.
5. Requests that general topics or themes be restricted will not be honored.
6. By selecting this option, you are agreeing to let your child know, in advance, that there are some materials they may not be allowed to check out from the library.
7. Please also keep in mind that while this process may reduce the likelihood that a student will be exposed to content from the titles selected for restriction, it does not guarantee that a student will not pull a book off the shelf to look at it or will not be exposed to or hear about content from a classmate.
8. Books are added to the library media collection continually and it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor changes that may impact their restriction request.

Student

Name _____ Grade _____

Parent/Guardian

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

Book Title/Author

#1 _____

Book Title/Author

#2 _____

Book Title/Author

#3 _____

Book Title/Author

#4 _____

Book Title/Author

#5 _____

Book Title/Author

#6 _____

Book Title/Author

#7 _____

Book Title/Author

#8 _____

Book Title/Author

#9 _____

Book Title/Author

#10 _____

Book Title/Author

#11 _____

Book Title/Author

#12 _____

Book Title/Author

#13 _____

Book Title/Author

#14 _____

Book Title/Author

#15 _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

_____ Date _____

Submit completed form to the library media specialist of the school that your child attends.

Initial Reconsideration Request

The privacy of the individuals submitting Reconsideration Requests may not be protected if, once submitted, this form is the subject of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. FOIA grants the public the right to request records from any federal agency. Questions or concerns about FOIA may be directed to the building principal or assistant superintendent.

Instructions:

1. You must be a parent and/or guardian of a student enrolled in Newtown Public Schools to submit this form.
2. Before submitting this form, you must contact the library media specialist to review any existing documentation of rationales for selection, reconsideration requests and determinations. If the material you are requesting be reconsidered does not appear on any list, you can then share your concerns with the library media specialist to see if they can be addressed without submitting this form.
3. Submission of this form is an attestation that you have read or viewed the material in its entirety.
4. All fields must be fully completed. Incomplete, indecipherable or duplicated forms will not be considered.
5. A separate form must be completed for each material you are requesting be reconsidered.

Title _____

Author _____

Publisher (if known) _____ Copyright Date _____

Requester _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____

What brought this material to your attention? _____

Have you reached out to the library media specialist to discuss your concerns related to this material?

_____ Yes, Date _____ No

Have you personally read or viewed this entire material? _____ Yes _____ No

What concerns you about this material?

If the material in question is a book, please cite the pages and passages that you question. Use a separate piece of paper if you require more space.

Page #: Passage:

Page #: Passage:

Page # Passage:

Are there resources that you can share to provide additional information and/or viewpoints relating to this material that should be considered?

What action are you requesting be taken regarding this material?

_____ Re-evaluation regarding age-appropriateness

_____ Removal from school library

_____ Other:

Signature of Requester

_____ Date _____

Submit completed form to the library media specialist of the school in which the material exists.

Final Reconsideration Request

The privacy of the individuals submitting Reconsideration Requests may not be protected if, once submitted, this form is the subject of a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. FOIA grants the public the right to request records from any federal agency. Questions or concerns about FOIA may be directed to the building principal or assistant superintendent.

Instructions:

1. This form can only be used if you have filed an Initial Reconsideration Request and disagree with the outcome of that request.
2. You must be a parent and/or guardian of a student enrolled in Newtown Public Schools to submit this form.
3. Submission of this form is an attestation that you must have read or viewed the material in its entirety.
4. All fields must be fully completed. Incomplete, indecipherable or duplicated forms will not be considered.
5. A separate form must be completed for each material you are requesting be reconsidered.

Title _____

Author _____

Publisher (if known) _____

Copyright Date _____

Requester _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

Why are you pursuing a reconsideration of this material?

In what way(s) do you believe the material subject to this reconsideration request fails to comply with criteria set forth in Policy 6163.1?

Are there resources that you can share to provide additional information and/or viewpoints relating to this

material that should be considered but have not yet been? ____ Yes ____ No

If so, what are they?

Please provide any other information that should be considered in this final review of the material?

What action are you requesting be taken regarding this material?

____ Re-evaluation regarding age-appropriateness

____ Removal from school library

____ Moved to another school library

____ Other:

Signature of Requester

Date

Submit completed form to:

Superintendent of Schools
Newtown Public School District
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 07470