



2023-2024 Littlewood Elementary

Media Center Handbook

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About the Media Center

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday 7:20 to 2:00

Staff

Kelly Moore	MEDIA SPECIALIST	
Baylee Adams	MEDIA AIDE	

Library Advisory Committee

KELLY MOORE	Media Specialist	
Nicole King	Primary Teacher	
CHARLIE JENKINS	Middle Grade Teacher	

Emma Dreyer	Parent	
JUSTIN RUSSELL	Principal	

Media Specialist and Principal Signatures

These signatures acknowledge the adoption of the __2023-2024__ school year Media Center Handbook policies by the Littlewood Media Center.

Media Specialist Signature

Date

Principal Signature

Date

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide quality literature and resources to the Littlewood Elementary community in order to stimulate creativity, intellectual curiosity, and to facilitate lifelong learning and research.

District Media Services

The District Media Services mission is to facilitate the goal of having every school library provide rich resources addressing the interests and curricular needs of the school's population. Our goal includes promoting reading, a desire for learning, equitable access, ethical use and collaboration with individuals preparing our students for success in the 21st century.

Alachua County Public Schools

We are committed to the success of every student.

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939. Amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

Selection Policy

School Selection Policy

Scope

The Littlewood Media Center serves the students, faculty, and staff of the Littlewood community. The library collection provides materials and resources that are consistent with the philosophy and educational goals of Littlewood. The collection includes both curriculum materials and resources, as well as recreational materials, all in a variety of formats. The library collection strives to meet the needs of all its users by maintaining a diverse collection representing various points of view on current and historical issues and area of interest to the school community.

Method

The Littlewood selects materials and resources that support, enrich, and help implement the educational philosophy of Littlewood. Considerations are based on recommendations from faculty, staff, and other members of the school community; reviews in reputable media, e.g. School Library Journal, Booklist, Library Journal, et. al.; material previews from vendors and publishers; and the subject knowledge and expertise of the librarian. Selection of materials and resources is based on an evaluation of the existing collection, the curriculum requirements, and the diverse needs of students, faculty, and staff.

Gift materials are accepted at the discretion of the library staff and judged by the selection criteria in this policy. Selection is an ongoing process of continuous review, evaluation, and weeding. It includes the removal of resources and materials no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost/worn materials of educational value. Disposition of discarded items is under the direction of the librarian.

Material is weeded using one or more of the following criteria:

- Misleading, outdated and/or inaccurate
- Worn or damaged beyond repair
- Superseded by newer edition
- Lacking in discernible literary or scientific merit
- Irrelevant to needs/interests of school community

No materials are excluded or removed from the library on the basis of the author's race, nationality, political, social, or religious beliefs. Materials dealing with controversial views are judged as entire works, not as isolated passages.

Criteria for Selection

Selection criteria for materials and resources are based on consideration of three main areas of concern: the intellectual content of the material; the philosophy and goals of Littlewood; and the characteristics of the user.

In selecting materials and resources the following specific criteria are used as they apply:

AUTHORITY - refers to the qualifications and credibility of the persons accountable for the creation of the material.

SCOPE - refers to the overall purpose and coverage of the material.

FORMAT & TECHNICAL QUALITY - refers to the physical character and creation standards evident in the work.

AUTHENTICITY - refers to the validity, reliability and completeness of the material as well as the degree of bias or objectivity presented; accuracy and timeliness are important considerations here, also.

TREATMENT & ARRANGEMENT - refers to the clarity, logical development and flow of the content.

AESTHETICS - refers to the material's appeal to the imagination, senses, and intellect so that the user's discernment and sense of artistic appreciation will be developed.

PRICE - refers to the value of the contemplated selections relative to existing budget limitations and other priorities.

SUITABILITY - refers to the appropriateness of the material to the prevailing maturity level of the students who will be utilizing the resource and its application to the school district's educational objectives and curriculum.

SPECIAL FEATURES - refers to any distinctive or unique characteristics of one material that may be absent from others on the same subject.

These policies reflect the requirements of the School Board of Alachua County.

School Board Selection Policy

4.64 Board Policy on Educational Media Materials Selections

1. Objectives of Selection - The primary objective of the school's educational media center is to implement, enrich, and support the educational program of the school. The center shall provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the representation of different points of view. The School Board asserts that the responsibility of the media center is to provide:

- a. materials which, support and provide continuity to the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interest, abilities and maturity levels of the students;
- b. materials which will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
- c. a background of information enabling students to make intelligent judgments in their daily life;
- d. materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to the American heritage; and
- e. a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the media center which places principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality.

2. Criteria for Selection of Educational Materials -

- a. The standards to determine the propriety of the educational materials shall be pursuant to Section 233.165, Florida Statutes.
- b. First consideration shall be given to the needs of the individual school based on knowledge of the curriculum, of the existing collection, and of the needs of children and youth. Request from users of the collection (i.e. administrators, faculty, parents, and students) shall be given high priority.
- c. Materials shall be considered on the basis of accuracy of content, overall purpose, timeliness, importance of the subject matter, quality of the writing / production, readability and popular appeal, authoritativeness, comprehensiveness of material, reputation of the publisher / producer reputation and significance of the author / artist / composer / producer, etc.; and, format and price.
- d. Gifts of media or money shall be accepted with the understanding that their use or disposition shall be determined by those persons having the responsibility for acquisitions, according to the same selection criteria and procedures as purchased materials.

3. Procedures for Selection -

a. In selecting materials for purchase, the school media specialist shall evaluate the existing collection and shall consult with: reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids.

Media staff, curriculum consultants, faculty, students, and community representatives.

b. In specific areas, the media specialist shall: purchase materials which are outstanding and frequently used; replace periodically worn or missing basic items; and withdraw out of date or unnecessary items from the collection.

Diversity

The Littlewood promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the ongoing need to increase awareness of and responsiveness to the diversity of the communities served. Littlewood recognizes the critical need for access to library and information resources, services, and technologies by all people, especially those who may experience language or literacy-related barriers; economic distress; cultural or social isolation; physical or attitudinal barriers; racism; discrimination on the basis of appearance, ethnicity, immigrant status, religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression; or barriers to equal education, employment, and housing.

Libraries can and should play a crucial role in empowering diverse populations for full participation in a democratic society. Within Littlewood efforts to include diversity in programs, activities, services, professional literature, products and continuing education is ongoing and encouraged.

Adapted from [ALA Policy B.3 Diversity](#)

Circulation Policy

Student CKO

Kindergarten will check out one book at a time and leave it in the classroom.

First Grade will check out one book at a time for one week and may take it home.

Second through Fifth Grade may check out two books at a time for one week and may take them home.

Teacher CKO

Teachers may check out any materials needed for as long as needed.

Lost Books

Under the union contract teachers may not be compelled to pay for books, equipment or other materials which have been checked out for classroom use and stolen by students

If however, a teacher checks out a book for personal use, (for a son's assignment, etc.) he or she is responsible for payment if the material is not returned

Overdue Policy

Books may be checked out for one week at a time. Books may be renewed up to three times. Overdue notices will be distributed twice a month. Students are asked to replace missing or damaged items.

District Lost, Damaged, Overdue Policy

- Students unable to pay for lost books may be allowed to work off the debt either in the media center or in the classroom at the discretion of the media specialist and principal of the school.
- Holding report cards until a student's debt is cleared is **NOT** permitted.
- If there are extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student, the media specialist has the option to waive charges for lost books.
- Money collected for lost or damaged books will be put into that school's internal account and spent on other **books and audiovisual materials** for the media center.
- In the event that lost materials which have been paid for are returned within one year, a full refund will be given.
 - Email your bookkeeper with title, barcode number, student name and amount paid. Clear student record.
- Elementary and Middle School Media Specialists should make every effort to resolve problems before the child moves on to middle or high school.
- If a student pays for or returns a book, it is imperative that the student's record be cleared on the computer immediately.

Reconsideration of Materials Policy

In all cases, where materials being used in a school are challenged, they should be challenged at the level where the materials are being used, and referred to the Superintendent and Board only if the citizen is not satisfied with the handling at the local level.

When a citizen wishes to question materials or text content, he/she should fill out the Citizens Request Form. This form must be filled out and turned in to the principal of the school where the materials are being challenged. The principal and a committee will review the materials using the appropriate form as applicable.

People to be considered for Review Committees (school or district):

- School media specialists (the media specialist chairs this committee)
- Experts in the field up for review (i.e., doctors, policemen, university professors)
- Teachers of the subject area
- Parents or lay citizens with knowledge or interest in the subject and students at the appropriate age level.

Material Challenge Process

1. Media Spec. and/or teacher;

- a. talks courteously with complainant
 - b. supplies Freedom to Read Statement
- gives copy of the school selection policy and request for reconsideration of materials form.
- c. If not satisfied, advises complainant to make appointment with principal
- 2. Principal
 - a. complainant meets with principal
 - b. talks with complainant and if not resolved
- 3. If complainant completes the form and returns it to the principal, principal appoints a committee.
- 4. School Committee
 - a. reads/views/listens to material in its entirety (within 15 days)
 - b. check reviews and general recommended lists
 - c. determines whether or not the material supports the curriculum
 - d. evaluated the material using appropriate reconsideration checklist
 - e. makes their recommendation Chairperson who reports to the principal
- 5. Principal
 - a. makes decision then
 - b. notifies Superintendent
 - c. notifies Media Supervisor
 - d. notifies complainant
- 6. Material is removed from that school only or material is retained in that school
- 7. If complainant is not satisfied, he/she is directed to the Superintendent
- 8. Superintendent accepts school committee's decision or appoints a district level review committee
- 9. District Committee
 - a. reads/views/listens to material in its entirety
 - b. check reviews and general recommended lists
 - c. determines whether or not the material supports the curriculum
 - d. evaluated the material using appropriate reconsideration checklist
 - e. makes their recommendation to the Superintendent
- 10. Superintendent reviews report and makes recommendation to the School Board
- 11. School Board acts on Superintendent's recommendation

Additional Resources

Library Bill of Rights

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

Statement on Labeling: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Evaluating Library Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Freedom to Read Statement, by the ALA Council

Weeding Policy

All Media Specialists are encouraged to weed their collections every year in order to maintain materials that are still useful and timely.

Weeding is defined as the practice of discarding excess copies, rarely used books, and materials with incorrect information or no longer relevant to the curriculum or needs of students.

Weeding should not be used as a means for withdrawing materials which are of a controversial nature or needing re-evaluation. The county adopted policy for handling the re-evaluation of materials should be followed for controversial material.

General Guidelines

1. Last date of circulation

If the material has not been in general use during the past three to five years (depending on the type of material).

2. Physical condition

If the condition is badly worn or excessively dirty, the item may be weeded, and a decision concerning replacement should be made.

3. Timeliness

This is one of the most frequent criteria: Reference may be to: (a) out-of-date materials, particularly in the sciences and technology. A rule of thumb is to reconsider almost anything more than three to five years of age, (b) materials no longer in demand, or that no longer support the curriculum or current community needs (c) older editions no longer used, and (d) dated textbooks, where they are part of the collection.

4. Reliability

Viewpoints change and must be reflected in the collection. Different perspectives /points of view should be included. (Example: if the Bible is part of the collection, holy books from other religions should also be included.)

5. Ephemera

Certain subject areas, from inspirational guides to how to make a million dollars, go out of fashion and use. This type of fad literature should be weeded, particularly when it is found that a title no longer circulates, is no longer timely, or the information seems unreliable.

6. Duplicates

Where there are duplicates and none seem to be circulating or used, a single copy may be all that is needed. At a later date (one to two years) the single copy should be reconsidered for weeding.

7. Reference works should be given special attention in order that all the above criteria be applicable in all of the special areas. Current information in this area is critical.

Student Behavior Expectations/ Policy

Students at Littlewood will follow our behavior plan in every part of their school day including media.

Roar:

Respectful

On Task

Act Safely

Responsible

Students will be expected to follow media center procedures during class. A warning will be given if behavior needs to be corrected. A time out will follow if behavior does not improve. The final consequence will be to leave the media center.

Technology Policy

School/Media Center Acceptable Use Policy

Students at Littlewood will follow the computer use rules found in the Alachua County Student Code of Conduct.

District Acceptable Use Policy

7540.03 - USE OF TECHNOLOGY BY STUDENTS

The District uses technology to support learning and to enhance instruction. The purpose of the Internet is to facilitate communication in support of research and education by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of the student's account must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the District. The goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

Acceptable Use

Students are expected to follow all procedures stated below, as well as those given orally by the appropriate staff, and to demonstrate ethical behavior that is of the highest order in using technology at the school.

Access

Students will:

- A. Access the Internet through the Board's approved network;
- B. Agree to allow monitoring; and
- C. Use only the username and password assigned to them by the District.

Procedures for Use

Students will:

- A. Be polite and use appropriate language for the educational environment and for the educational activity in which they are currently involved;
- B. Always report any known violations of Board policies, including inappropriate messages and possible security problems, to their teacher or administrator;
- C. Save work on their personal devices and/or external storage devices (e.g., flash drives).

Prohibited Uses

Students will NOT:

- A. Use personal data plans.
- B. Share with anyone else their username and password.
- C. Access electronic mail belonging to school employees or other students.
- D. Send messages using a false identity or use the accounts of others to send messages.
- E. Use District technology or personal WCDs at school to make unauthorized purchases of products or services.
- F. Access the control panel on a district computer, or attempt to modify settings in any way.
- G. Steal or destroy the school's technology (e.g., computers, projectors, etc.).
- H. Violate or attempt to violate the security of the computer network.
- I. Take actions (whether successful or not) to bypass the District's filter or deny access to, disrupt, or destroy the service of the computer network.
- J. Attach or install personal computer software or any WCD on the school's computers or the network. This does not include data storage devices (e.g., flash drives).
- K. Use District technology resources for illegal purposes or any other activity prohibited by District policy.
- L. Reveal personal information about themselves or others. (e.g., photos, addresses, e-mail addresses, or telephone numbers) without the approval of their teacher or parent.
- M. Use District technology for personal financial gain, product advertisement, commercial activities, political campaigning, or solicitation.
- N. Capture, transmit, or receive test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty.
- O. Access social media, except for educational use in accordance with their teacher's plan.
- P. Use technology in any way to threaten, humiliate, harass, embarrassed or intimidate another person. See Policy 5517.01, Bullying and Harassment.

In particular, students are prohibited from:

1. transmitting material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit or that harasses or disparages others based upon their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or political beliefs; or
2. Sending, sharing, viewing or possessing pictures, text messages, e-mails or other, materials of a sexual nature (e.g., sexting) in electronic or any other form.

"Sexting" is the knowing transmission or distribution to another person, through a computer or similar device, of any photograph or video of any person that depicts nudity. Sexting also includes possessing a photo of any person that was transmitted or distributed by another person that depicts nudity. (F.S. 847.0141)

Violation of these prohibitions shall result in disciplinary action, and will be reported to local law enforcement and child services as required by law.

Liability

Users who are granted access to the network assume personal responsibility and liability, both civil and criminal, for use of the technology not authorized by Board policy. The Board is not responsible for any unauthorized charges for purchases made by students using the District's network.

Services

Access to the District's network is available but not guaranteed in all classrooms at all times. The District makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The District will not be responsible for any damages suffered. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, nondeliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or errors or omissions including any and all viruses. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the student's own risk.

The District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

All communications made through the District's network are subject to filtering and monitoring. School staff will monitor the instructional use of technology in the classroom. Monitoring may include, but is not necessarily limited to, visual observations of online activities during class sessions; or use of specific monitoring tools to review browser history and network, server, and computer logs.

The District is not responsible for providing troubleshooting or technical support for personal WCDs.

Security

Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If the student can identify a security problem, the student must notify the school's network system administrator or the District-wide network system administrator. Security vulnerabilities shall not be shared with others. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Internet.

Pursuant to Federal law, all K-12 students shall receive education in the following:

- A. safety and security while using e-mail, chat rooms, social media, and other forms of electronic communications;
- B. the dangers inherent with the online disclosure of personally identifiable information; and,
- C. the consequences of unauthorized access (e.g., "hacking") cyberbullying and other unlawful or inappropriate activities by students online.

Vandalism

Vandalism is defined as any deliberate or malicious attempt to harm or destroy computer hardware or peripherals, data of another user, the Internet, the District's network, or any other networks that are connected to the District. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Vandalism may result in the loss of computer privileges and/or other discipline.

Disciplinary Actions for Improper Use

Students who access the Internet/network while on Board property shall abide by the provisions of this policy and the Code of Student Conduct. Violations may result in disciplinary action.

F.S. 1001.43, 1001.51

H.R. 4577, P.L. 106-554, Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000

P.L. 110-385, Title II, Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act

47 U.S.C. 254(h) (1), Communications Act of 1934, as amended

20 U.S.C. 6801 et seq., Part F, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended

20 U.S.C. 6777, 9134 (2003)

18 U.S.C. 2256

18 U.S.C. 1460

18 U.S.C. 2246

Adopted 7/17/07

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Appendices

Citizens Request Form: Re-Evaluation of Materials

Initiated by _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Representing: Self? _____

Organization? _____

School where materials are used _____ Grade level used _____

Author of the material in question _____

Title _____

Copyright date _____

Publisher _____

AV Materials; Kind of media (film, filmstrip, record, etc.) _____

Other materials or presentation; identify _____

Please respond to the following questions. If sufficient space is not available, please use back of this sheet or additional sheet of paper.

1. Have you read, seen, viewed, or listened to this material in its entirety?
2. What do you believe is the main idea of this material?
3. To what do you object? Please cite specific passages, pages, sequences, etc.
4. What do you feel might result from use of this material?
5. Are you aware of reviews of this material? What reviews have you read?
6. Was the material required? _____ Recommended? _____ By whom _____
7. For what grade level might this be suitable? _____
8. What action would you prefer that the school take on this material?
 - a. Do not assign it to my child
 - b. Other
9. In its place, what material do you recommend which would provide adequate information on the subject or as a valuable picture and perspective of our society?

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

Library Advisory Committee Reconsideration Form: Fiction and Other Literary Forms

Title of Book _____

Author _____

A. PURPOSE

1. What is the purpose, theme or message of the material? How well does the author/producer/composer accomplish this purpose?

2. If the story is fantasy, is it the type that has imaginative appeal and is suitable for children? () Yes () No; for young adults? () Yes () No. If both are marked no, for what age group would you recommend? _____

3. Will the reading and/or viewing and/or listening to material result in more compassionate understanding of human beings? () Yes () No.

4. Does it offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and problems of various groups of people? () Yes () No.

5. Are the challenged elements of the story an integral part of the materials? () Yes () No.

B. CONTENT

1. Does the material give a realistic picture of life at that time period? () Yes () No.

2. When factual information is part of the story, is it presented accurately? () Yes () No.

3. If there is bias, can it be identified by the intended user? () Yes () No. Does this bias detract from the usefulness of the material? () Yes () No.

4. Are concepts presented appropriate to the ability and maturity of the intended users? () Yes () No.

5. Do characters speak in a language true to the period and section of the country in which they live? () Yes () No.

6. Does the material offend in some special way the sensibilities of any group? () Yes () No.

7. Is there preoccupation with sex, violence, cruelty, brutality, and aberrant behavior that would make this material inappropriate for children? () Yes () No; young adults? () Yes () No.

8. If there is use of offensive language, is it appropriate to the purpose of the text for children? () Yes () No; for young adults? () Yes () No.

9. Is the material free from derisive names and epithets that would be offensive? () Yes () No.

10. Is the material well written or produced? () Yes () No.

11. Does the material give a broader understanding of human behavior without stressing differences of class, race, color, sex, education, religion or philosophy in any adverse way? () Yes () No.
12. Does the material make a significant contribution to the history of literature or ideas? () Yes () No.
13. Are the illustrations appropriate and in good taste? () Yes () No.
14. Are the illustrations realistic in relation to the story? () Yes () No.

C. REVIEWS

1. Source of review _____

Favorable review _____ Unfavorable review _____

2. Does this title appear in one or more reputable selection aids? () Yes () No.

If answer is yes, please list titles of selection aids.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

RECOMMENDATION BY SCHOOL MEDIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR
TREATMENT OF CHALLENGED MATERIALS

SIGNATURE OF MEDIA ADVISORY REVIEW COMMITTEE

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Date _____

Library Advisory Committee Reconsideration Form: Materials Other Than Fiction

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

A. PURPOSE

1. What is the overall purpose of the material?

2. Is the purpose accomplished? () Yes () No.

B. AUTHENTICITY

1. Is the author competent and qualified in the field? () Yes () No.

1. What is the reputation and significance of the author and publisher/producer in the field?

3. Is the material up-to-date? () Yes () No.

4. Are information sources well documented? () Yes () No.

5. Are translations and retellings faithful to the original? () Yes () No.

C. APPROPRIATENESS

1. Does the material promote the educational goals and objectives of the curriculum of _____ County Schools? () Yes () No. The local school? () Yes () No.

2. Is it appropriate to the level of instruction intended? () Yes () No.

3. Are the illustrations appropriate to the subject and age levels? () Yes () No.

D. CONTENT

1. Is the content of this material well presented by providing adequate scope, range, depth and continuity? () Yes () No.

2. Does this material present information not otherwise available? () Yes () No.

3. Does this material give a new dimension or direction to its subject? () Yes () No.

E. REVIEWS

1. Source of review _____

Favorably reviewed _____ Unfavorably reviewed _____

2. Does this title appear in one or more reputable selection aids?

() Yes () No. If answer is yes, please list titles of selection aids.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

RECOMMENDATION BY SCHOOL MEDIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR TREATMENT OF CHALLENGED MATERIALS

SIGNATURE OF MEDIA ADVISORY REVIEW COMMITTEE

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Date _____

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help

them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society, individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the

comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

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A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](#)
[The Association of American University Presses](#)
[The Children's Book Council](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
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