

Instruction

Library Collection Development and Maintenance, and Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy

The New Fairfield Board of Education (the “Board”), having consulted with the Superintendent of Schools for the New Fairfield Public Schools (the “District”), the District’s director of curriculum or a person in an equivalent position, and a librarian employed by the Board, adopts this Policy Regarding Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration in accordance with Connecticut law.

It is the policy of the Board to ensure that all District library materials maintained by the District are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Connecticut law, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

Any school library media specialist or school library staff member who, in good faith, implements this policy shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding that results from such implementation.

The Board shall review this policy, and update it as necessary, every five years.

I. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

“Individual with a vested interest” means any school staff member employed by the Board, the parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed, and any student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed.

“Library and other educational material” means any material belonging to, on loan to or otherwise in the custody of a District school library media center, including, but not limited to, nonfiction and fiction books, magazines, reference books, supplementary titles, multimedia and digital material, software and other material not required as part of classroom instruction.

“Remove” means deliberately taking library material out of a library's collection. The term **“remove”** does not include the process of clearing such collections of any materials that are no longer useful.

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“**School library staff member**” means a school library media specialist, school librarian, any certificated or noncertificated staff member whose assignment is in the school library, or any individual carrying out or assisting with the functions of a school library media specialist or school librarian.

II. Library Collection Development and Maintenance

The Board recognizes that library and other educational material should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all students and should represent a wide range of viewpoints in the collection as a whole.

The Board requires that students have access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate material and shall provide access to library and other educational material that is relevant to the research, independent reading interests, and educational needs of students based on a student’s age, development, or grade level. The Board also recognizes the importance of the school library media center as a place for voluntary inquiry, the dissemination of information and ideas, and the promotion of free expression and free access to ideas by students.

The Board acknowledges that a school library media specialist is professionally trained to curate and develop a collection that provides students with access to an array of age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

Staff, students, and families may submit verbal, electronic (email), or written requests for book titles or other library materials to the school's library media specialist for consideration in the collection; the library media specialist will give consideration to the request in the context of the Standards and collection development guidelines described in this policy.

The Board directs the Superintendent to establish a procedure by which a certified school library specialist will continually review library and other educational material within a school library media center using professionally accepted standards, which shall include, but need not be limited to, the material’s relevance, the physical condition of the material, the availability of duplicates or copies of the material, the availability of more recent age-appropriate or grade-level-appropriate material, and continued demand for the material (the “Library Review Procedure”). The Library Review Procedure is attached hereto as Appendix A.

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III. Library Displays and Programs

The Board recognizes that displays should be provided for the interest, information and enlightenment of all students; represent a wide range of viewpoints; require student access to age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate content; and provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of students.

The Board further recognizes the importance of library displays and student programs as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by students.

The Board acknowledges that a school library media specialist is professionally trained to curate and develop displays and programs that provide students with access to an array of age-appropriate and grade-level-appropriate library and other educational material.

IV. Library Material Review and Reconsideration

The purpose of this policy section regarding library material review and reconsideration is to establish a process for individuals with a vested interest to challenge any District library and other educational material, display, or student program, as well as a process for the District to respond to any such challenges and related parameters. It is recognized that District staff make a good faith effort to provide multiple viewpoints. A collection, display, or some resources may be under development or in circulation at a given moment in time.

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A. Standards for Reviewing Challenges to Library and Other Educational Material, Display, or Student Program

1. All library materials shall be evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in Connecticut law, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.
2. Library and other educational material, displays, and student programs shall only be excluded for legitimate pedagogical purposes or for professionally accepted standards of collection maintenance practices, as adopted in this policy and/or any accompanying procedure for the continual review of library and educational material within a school library.
3. No library and other educational material, display, or program shall be removed from library media centers, or programs be cancelled, because of the origin, background or viewpoints expressed in such material, display, or program, or because of the origin, background, or viewpoints of the creator of such material, display, or program. unless such material is not developmentally- or age-appropriate at a given school level based on CT State curriculum standards.
4. The removal, exclusion, or censoring of any book on the sole basis that a person with a vested interest finds such book offensive is prohibited.
5. Any process for an individual with a vested interest to challenge any library and other educational material, display, or student program shall neither favor nor disfavor any group based on protected characteristics.

B. Process for Challenging Library and Other Educational Material, Display, or Student Program

The Board establishes the following process for individuals with a vested interest to challenge any library and other educational material, display, or student program, as well as a process for the District to respond to any such challenges:

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1. An individual with a vested interest may submit a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material Form (the "Request Form") to the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material, display, or student program is being challenged to initiate a review of such material. The Request Form is attached hereto as Appendix B.

Using the Request Form, an individual shall specify which portion or portions of such material the individual objects to and provide an explanation of the reasons for such objection. The individual submitting the Request Form must include the individual's full legal name, address, and telephone number. If the individual who has submitted a Request Form is a parent or guardian, consideration of requests to reconsider and remove material, displays, or student programs shall be limited to the parents and guardians of students and eligible students currently enrolled in the school or District.

2. Upon receipt, the principal or the principal's designee shall promptly forward the Request Form to the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee and communicate to the school's Library Media Specialist.

3. The administration may consolidate any requests for review and reconsideration of the same challenged library and other educational material.

4. For each challenged library and other educational material, the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, shall appoint a Review Committee consisting of:

- a. the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee;
- b. the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material is being challenged, or the principal's designee;
- c. the director of curriculum, or a person in an equivalent position, employed by the Board;
- d. a representative from the Board;
- e. at least one grade-level-appropriate, certified teacher familiar with the library material, provided the teacher selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form;
- f. a parent or guardian of a student age thirteen years or younger enrolled in the District, provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form;

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- g. a parent or guardian of a student age fourteen years or older enrolled in the District, provided the parent or guardian selected is not the individual who submitted the Request Form; and
- h. a certified school librarian employed by the Board or employed by another board of education in the state.

In cases where the request is submitted by a student enrolled in grades nine through twelve, and when appropriate and at the discretion of the Superintendent, a student enrolled in grades nine through twelve may serve on the Review Committee, provided the student selected is not the individual who submitted the Request for Reconsideration and the Superintendent consults with the principal of the school involved in such reconsideration request prior to making the determination whether to include the student on the Review Committee.

5. Any library and other educational material being challenged shall remain available in the school library media center according to such material's catalog record and be available for a student to reserve, check out, or access until a final decision is made by the Review Committee.

6. The Review Committee must evaluate the Request Form; read the challenged material in its entirety; evaluate the challenged material against this policy; and make a written decision on whether or not to remove the challenged material not later than sixty (60) school days from the date the Request Form was received by the principal or the principal's designee. The Review Committee shall provide a copy of the committee's decision and report to the individual with a vested interest who submitted the Request Form and to the principal of the school.

7. The individual with a vested interest who submitted the Request Form may appeal the Review Committee's decision to the Board. The Board shall determine whether the reconsideration process was followed and communicate its decision to the individual.

8. Once a decision has been made by the Review Committee any library and other educational material, such material cannot be subject to a new request for review and reconsideration for a period of three (3) years.

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Legal References: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15c

Public Act No. 25-168, “An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2027, and Making Appropriations Therefore, and Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget.”

Policy adopted:

NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New Fairfield, Connecticut

APPENDIX A

LIBRARY REVIEW PROCEDURE

Library Collection Development and Review Procedures

Collection development is an ongoing process undertaken by the school's library media specialist. It includes selecting library materials using the selection guidelines noted below, reviewing and removing materials from the collection as needed, and replacing lost and worn materials as needed.

When selecting library materials, District library media specialists take into account:

- Fiscal responsibility/budgetary constraints;
- Collection statistics as identified by data analyses, considering age of collection, suggested number of copies per student, and areas of need;
- Whether the informational need can be met by current database content and electronic subscriptions, aiming to leverage existing digital investments first;
- Alignment with curricular and cocurricular programs, district goals, and the District Vision of the Learner, in consultation with the instructional leadership and administrative teams as needed;
- Opportunities to enrich and support the curriculum and students as readers taking into consideration the various interests, abilities, learning styles and developmental levels of the students served. This includes ensuring that any new material uses language that is appropriate for the targeted grade range and developmental levels and whether the new material's treatment of difficult or sensitive subjects (e.g., death, mental health, violence, sexuality) is in a developmentally-appropriate way for the intended student audience;
- Consultation with professionally prepared resources (e.g., children's literature databases, School Library Journal, Kirkus, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), VOA, local, state, and national literary awards, etc.), to identify materials that meet evolving needs and remain current;
- Circulation history at District libraries to note emerging interests of students and staff;
- Requests of materials by staff, students, and faculty for educational, research, or literary purposes;

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- A commitment to providing multiple perspectives of an issue and a representative range of materials to reflect student experiences locally as well as the global community of our world;
- The library collection as a whole, with attention to gaps, redundancies, and emerging needs.

Books gifted to the school library will be evaluated according to these guidelines as well.

Systematic review and withdrawal of library materials that are no longer relevant or useful is necessary to maintain the quality of the collection and make efficient use of space. The Library/Media Specialist is responsible for this process and may confer with teaching staff and administration in questionable cases.

In the review and withdrawal of materials, the age of the material, use, alignment with curriculum, programming, learner interest, and physical condition will be taken into account. The following content guidance will be applied:

- A. Science, travel, geography, technical information (computer, fiber optics, etc.) more than five years from copyright date should be examined and replaced with more timely materials as budgets allow.
- B. Fiction that has not circulated for five years and is not recognized as having permanent value should be withdrawn.
- C. Superseded editions unless they contain unique materials (maps, bibliographies, charts, etc.) should be withdrawn.
- D. Duplicate copies of materials that were previously popular should be withdrawn.
- E. Obsolete, discredited, or unauthorized information should be withdrawn.
- F. Almanacs, yearbooks, etc., older than five years should be withdrawn. (*Decennial editions may be kept.*)

The physical condition of library materials may result in the withdrawal of some materials over time. Books with torn or ragged covers, yellowed pages, more than four pages missing, will be withdrawn unless contents are necessary and irreplaceable. (They may be repaired if possible.)

When items are removed from the collection, library media specialists will follow New Fairfield Board of Education policies to determine how to best reassign or discard materials.

APPENDIX B

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIAL

This form may be used by an individual with a vested interest to challenge any library or other educational material, display, or student program in accordance with the Board's Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration policy. The form should be completed in its entirety and submitted to the principal of the school in which the library and other educational material are being challenged to initiate a review of such material.

Full Legal Name of Person Submitting Request:

Please note that the process for challenging any library and other educational material, display, or student program is available only to the following "individuals with a vested interest" as defined in the Board's Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration policy:

- **any school staff member employed by the Board ("Staff Member"),**
- **the parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed ("Parent/Guardian"), and**
- **any student currently enrolled in a school operated by the Board at the time a request for reconsideration is filed ("Student").**

Referring to the definitions immediately above, please indicate your role by checking any or all of the following that apply. I am a:

_____ Staff Member _____ Parent/Guardian _____ Student

Address:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

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I have read the Board's Library Collection Development and Maintenance, Library Displays and Programs, and Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy: (check one)

☐ Yes

☐ No

I am requesting that the following library material(s), display(s), and/or student program(s) be reviewed:

I am requesting that this material be reviewed because I object to: (check one)

☐ The entire material

☐ A specific portion or portions of the material (identify portion(s) below)

I provide the following explanation of the reasons for my objection(s) stated above:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Received by:

Name: _____

School: _____

Date: _____