

Baltimore County Public Schools

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER COLLECTIONS

The Baltimore County Public School policy states that each office in the Department of Instruction shall establish a Materials Review and Selection Committee to determine criteria for selecting materials to ensure that all instructional materials extend the knowledge and understanding of the Essential Curriculum. The following policy was developed by the Office of Library and Information Technology.

School library media specialists are responsible for the review, evaluation, and selection of the school library media collection. They are guided by the system-level selection policy that embodies the philosophy and procedures set forth in national, state, and county documents. Library media specialists work cooperatively with administrators and teachers to provide resources which represent diverse points of view, stimulate growth in thinking skills, and promote the overall educational program. Library media collections are developed to meet both curricular and personal needs. To ensure that these needs are met, library media specialists apply selection criteria and use recommended selection tools. All purchases, including gifts, should meet the same selection standards.

This selection policy reflects the philosophy and goals of the school system and supports the principles of intellectual freedom described in [*Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*](#), the [*Library Bill of Rights*](#) (ALA), [*Students' Right to Read*](#) (NCTE), and other [position statements on intellectual freedom](#) from the American Library Association and the American Association of School Librarians. Baltimore County Public Schools complies with federal laws regarding Internet safety and protection by requiring a filtering proxy server on its wide area network. See [Baltimore County Public Schools Telecommunications Policies and Rules](#).

Selection Criteria for Library Media Materials

- **Appropriate for recommended levels**

Library media materials should be accessible to students of varied abilities, and meet informational and interest needs of all students.

- **Pertinent to the curriculum and the objectives of the instructional program**

Library media materials should be selected on the basis of assessed curricular needs. Materials should reflect the identified learning outcomes of the instructional program.

- **Accurate in terms of content**

Library media materials should present facts in an objective manner. Authority of the author, organization, publisher/producer should be a consideration in selection. Materials concerning human development and family life should contain facts which are presented in a manner appropriate to the level of the students.

- **Reflective of the pluralistic nature of a global society**

Library media materials should provide a global perspective and promote diversity as a positive attribute of our society. It is important to include materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures.

- **Free of bias and stereotype**

Materials should reflect the basic humanity of all people and be free of stereotypes, caricatures, distorted dialect, sexual bias, and other offensive characteristics. Library materials concerning religious, social, and political content should inform rather than indoctrinate.

- **Representative of differing viewpoints on controversial subjects**

Students have the right to information on both sides of a controversial issue. By having access to a variety of resources students will have the knowledge base to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. The school library media center provides free and equitable access to all information.

- **Appropriate format to effectively teach the curriculum**

Library media materials should be available in variety of formats, e.g., print, nonprint,

electronic, multimedia, to meet the needs and learning styles of a diverse student population.

- **Recent copyright date as appropriate to the subject**

Library media materials should be assessed for currency of the information as it relates to the content and purpose of the item.

- **Acceptable in literary style and technical quality**

Literary quality, technical merit, physical arrangement, and aesthetic characteristics should be considered as integral components in the evaluation of all media formats.

- **Cost effective in terms of use**

Library media materials should be evaluated for cost effectiveness in terms of accessibility, projected use, and durability.

- **Appropriate for students with special needs**

Library media materials should be provided to meet curricular needs and the individual needs, interests, and learning styles of all students at all levels.

Implementing the Selection Policy

The objective of the selection policy is to increase the awareness of educators of the many considerations one must apply when making decisions about information resources available to students and teachers. The rapid production of knowledge as characteristic of the "Information Age" brings with it many challenges. According to John Naisbitt, "we have for the first time an economy based on a key resource (information) that is not only renewable, but self generating. Running out of information is not a problem, but drowning in it is."

Library media specialists take leadership in communicating to the educational community the purpose and scope of the selection policy. The responsibility for coordinating the selection of library materials rests with the library media specialist who seeks faculty, student, and parent recommendations for purchase of library media materials. Favorable reviews from professional review journals and authoritative

selection references should be used when developing library media collections. Wherever possible, direct examination of materials is advisable to ensure that they meet selection criteria. Library media materials listed in the *Instructional Materials Catalog*, the *Periodicals Catalog*, and the *H.W. Wilson Catalog* have been evaluated by school library media specialists and approved for purchase.

Essential Curriculum and Collection Development

The major emphasis of collection development should be to provide materials which meet curricular needs. To assess these needs, knowledge of the Essential Curriculum and access to these guides is important. It is recommended that a copy of each curriculum guide be housed in the library media center. The library media specialist needs to be familiar with changes and additions to the curriculum and how they effect collection development.

Teacher Recommendations

Communication with teachers to assess curriculum needs and recommendations for purchase is an important part of the selection process. Since the library media collection is an integral part of the instructional and learning process, the strength and value of the collection are ensured when teachers are actively involved in the selection process. A sample form is included at the end of this document.

Student and Parent Recommendations

Suggestions from students and parents is also an important part of the selection process. As students seek information for curricular purposes or use the library media center for personal interests, students and parents are encouraged to make recommendations of specific resources or subject areas where information is needed. A sample form is included at the end of this document.

Professional Review Journals

The following online sources are recommended as tools to locate reviews. Most are considered professional review journals, e.g. Booklist, Booklinks, Multicultural Book Reviews, and School Library Journal; however, some are considered general popular review sources. Keep this in mind when using these sources. Many of the sources listed below are available for purchase on the *Periodicals Catalog*.

Review Resources

- [The ALAN Review](#)
- Amazon.com [General](#); [Children](#); [Teens](#)
- [Barnes and Noble](#)
- [Book Links](#)

- [The Book Reporter](#)
- [BookReview.com](#)
- [Booklist Online](#)
- [The BookPage](#)
- [BookWire](#)
- [Boston Book Review](#)
- [Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books](#)
- [Caldecott Medal Home Page](#)
- [Carol Hurst's Children's Literature](#)
- [Children's Book Reviews](#) (National Parenting Center)
- [Children's Books](#)
- [Children's Literature Web Guide](#)
- [Coretta Scott King Award Home](#)
- [Education Review](#)
- [Educational Software Review](#)
- [Follett TITLEWAVE](#)
- [Multicultural Book Reviews](#)
- [Newbery Medal Home Page](#)
- [Neverending Stories](#)
- [Notes from the Windowsill](#)
- [Teen Reading \(YALSA\)](#)
- [World of Reading](#) (reviews by children)
- [Young Adult Books](#)

Core Collection Tools

Core collection tools are authoritative selection references to help assess the quality of the media collection and the availability of resources from various publishers/producers. Unlike review journals which are published monthly/bi-monthly, core collection references are updated annually. The following core selection references are available from the LAMS Professional library or may be purchased locally:

- *Children's Catalog*
- *Elementary School Library Collection*
- *Junior High School Catalog*
- *Senior High School Catalog*

Online Collection Development and Acquisitions

Using technology to work effectively and efficiently is a goal of the Office of Library Information Services . During the 2000-2001 school year, a most successful 10.529 million online collection development, fund tracking, and acquisitions pilot revolutionized the way in which library media specialists do business. In addition, we

piloted the same process with elementary school libraries using the S.A.F.E. Grant funding.

Online ordering greatly reduces the volume of paperwork and ensures more timely delivery of goods, as well is a savings to the school system by reducing the costs incurred with the preparation of Purchase Requisitions. This process will be our "preferred" method of collection development and acquisitions. The Office of Library Information Services will continue to work with vendors and library media specialists to develop selection guides using the online ordering system and coordinate the process with the Business and Finance and Purchasing Departments of the Baltimore County Public Schools. For a description of the process, see the [School Library Facts](#) website created for the 10.529 million secondary library collection project.

Vendor Catalogs

Publisher and jobber catalogs can be useful in preparing orders and determining the availability of materials. The library media specialist should keep in mind that these are marketing tools, not selection tools. It is recommended that a *Publisher & Producer* file be kept only for those catalogs which are most useful and appropriate for the collection. Some catalogs list review sources, but they may not necessarily be positive ones. Also, some jobbers will prepare upon request subject specific bibliographies of materials, e.g., multicultural with reference to reviews. These lists can be used to facilitate preparation of purchase requisitions.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELECTION OF PRINT MATERIALS

There are general selection criteria which apply to all library media materials. The following media formats require additional considerations.

Books

Due to the high cost of materials, it is important to examine books with the following additional criteria in mind before purchasing:

- illustrations and layout
- Type style and text density
- Paper quality
- Durability of bindings
- Readability and interests levels
- Indexing

Paperbacks

Paperbacks are an inexpensive way to supplement the library media collection for duplication of titles, in-depth studies, special projects, and leisure reading. It is recommended that first copies of picture books be hardbacks.

When deciding whether to purchase paperback books or hardbound books consider the following:

- Curricular demand placed on these books in the individual school
- Use of these materials for research, independent reading, duplication of classics, and popular fiction
- Cost and use of paperback books as compared to the cost of hardback books

Periodicals

Periodicals support the curriculum and provide leisure reading for students. Professional review journals and library periodicals for instruction may be considered for purchase. Consider access to full text online periodical databases, e.g., ASAP1 from Dialog Information Services.

Newspapers

Newspapers may be ordered as needed. Consider access to full text online newspaper databases, e.g., *Baltimore Sun*, *New York Times* from Dialog Information Services and the limited editions of the same titles on the World Wide Web.

Pamphlets

Pamphlets that support the curriculum may be added to the collection. It is recommended that they be organized in an information file by subject rather than fully cataloged. Apply general selection criteria.

Reference

Reference materials in both print and electronic formats provide comprehensive information in both general and subject-specific areas. They also serve as access tools to information from other sources including school, public, academic, and electronic collections.

The following points need to be considered:

- Cost effective in terms of projected use
- Authority
- Arrangement and indexing
- User-friendly

SELECTION OF NONPRINT INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Each curricular office is responsible for establishing an Instructional Materials Evaluation Committee as set forth in the Baltimore County Public School's selection policy statement. As part of the review process, an annual Instructional Materials and Technology Exhibit is held to showcase instructional materials for sale by various publishers/producers. The exhibit is open to all teachers, students, and citizens interested in previewing instructional materials.

The Office of Library and Information Technology establishes a Nonprint Evaluation Committee to preview and evaluate instructional materials which are being considered for inclusion in the *Library Instructional Media Catalog*. All materials listed in this catalog are approved for purchase. Library media specialists who wish to suggest titles for preview and evaluation should request these materials through the Office of Library and Information Technology Review and Evaluation Center.

Considerations for Selection of Nonprint Materials

The criteria for selection of nonprint materials are essentially the same as for print materials. The quality of auditory and visual presentation should be considered as well as accuracy of information and the appropriateness of format.

Nonprint materials should:

- Promote instructional goals and support the curriculum
- Provide a variety of media formats to meet the needs of the curriculum
- Present content in appropriate format and acceptable technical quality .
- Avoid dense text and graphics

Considerations for Selection of Electronic Resources

The criteria for selection of electronic resources are essentially the same as for print materials. Electronic resources such as CD-ROM, computer software, and online services provide greater access to information. Access to these fee-based database services should be 24-hours a day with remote access from home. Availability of network versions and site license agreements are also factors in selection. See the [evaluation form](#) for detailed evaluation criteria developed for the [K-12 Maryland Digital Library Project](#), an initiative of the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Library Development and Services and chaired by Della Curtis, Coordinator, Office of Library Information Services.

Electronic resources should:

- Provide learner control through flexible pacing, variable difficulty, and optimal branching and linking
- Information is accurate and reliably maintained
- Organization, searching capabilities, and navigation tools enhance information retrieval
- Provide record keeping and management options, if applicable
- Provide readable text, attractive graphics, and an appealing layout
- Have easy-to-understand, comprehensive documentation.
- User friendly
- 24-hour access with remote connection from home

Access to Internet Resources

Access to the Internet is a right and privilege granted to all students by the Baltimore County Public Schools. Through the annual notification process of the Baltimore County Public School Discipline Code, parents or guardians will receive a booklet of all behavior expectations, including appropriate and safe use of the Internet. Parents or guardians who DO NOT want their child to have access to Internet resources must submit a letter to the school principal. The Telecommunications Policy defines use of the Internet for "educational purposes," outlines expectations for appropriate and acceptable use, guidelines for school and office web publishing, and copyright compliance. Go to the Baltimore County Public Schools Telecommunications Policy and Rules.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The school library media program is an integral part of the instructional process. As part of the instructional process, the collection development is based upon the belief that all students, teachers, administrators, and support staff should have open access to all forms of information relevant to learning and teaching the curriculum. To ensure

access to quality library media collections, a systematic process for assessing and building library media collections is essential.

Collection development is the ongoing process of identifying strengths and weaknesses of library media collections in terms of student needs. Collection development demonstrates that funds are being spent wisely and that library media collections meet the informational needs of the curriculum as well as independent reading and viewing needs of students. The three components involved in the collection development process are:

Analysis of the School Community

In order to be responsive to the unique needs of each school, a collection development process must be based upon an analysis of student needs at that particular school. There will be some similarities among library media collections across the county, but the profile provided by this analysis will ensure that the specific needs of each school are addressed.

Assessment of the Library Media Collection

Collection assessment is needed to determine the quality of the existing library media collection. It is an organized method for collecting statistics on the age of the collection, the number of titles in the collection, and the ability of the collection to meet curricular needs.

Selection and Acquisition of Materials

The selection and acquisition of new library media materials will be based upon the needs of each library media center as determined by the collection assessment process and upon the availability of funding. The Baltimore County Board of Education policy should be followed when selecting all library media materials.

MANAGING ORGANIZED COLLECTIONS FOR ACCESS

The Annotated Code of Maryland (COMAR 13A 05 04) and the [Maryland State Standards for School Library Media Programs](#) specify that students and staff shall have access to "an organized and centrally managed collection of instructional materials and technologies." The Baltimore County Public Schools ensures this regulation by its policy that all materials will be cataloged and processed, U.S. MARC Records are made for all holdings, and these digital records are imported in school library automated catalogs and circulation systems. Go to [Automation and Media](#)

[Processing Center](#) website for vision, policies, and procedures.

ASSESSMENT AND INVENTORY PROCESS

An essential step in collection development is assessment of the needs of the curriculum and student population with regard to library media resources. Library media specialists will develop yearly and long-range plans to assist in ongoing assessment.

Assessment of the collection includes taking inventory of existing materials, assessing materials in relation to needs of instructional units, and weeding outdated and inappropriate materials.

The inventory is a process by which holdings are checked against the automated cataloging system and the actual item to determine if the resource is still part of the collection and still meets selection criteria. The objective of this inventory is to ensure that the automated cataloging system accurately reflects the collection which is the key access point for students and teachers to locate information within the library. This procedure should not disrupt the library media program as automation of school library holdings greatly speed up the process using the barcode scanning feature. An annual inventory is recommended as the data is critical to making collection development decisions about the quality and quantity of the collection in meeting the needs of students and staff.

INVENTORY PROCEDURES

Weeding Library Media Materials

A good collection development plan must include weeding. The process of weeding is a key part of assessing the collection. It helps keep collections relevant, accurate, and useful; and it facilitates more effective use of space in the library media center.

Library media materials should be weeded if they:

- Are in poor physical condition
- Have not been circulated in the last five years
- Are outdated in content, use, or accuracy (Copyright date should be considered; however, do not make a decision to weed based solely on the copyright date of

the material. Some older material may be considered classic or may be of great historical value to your collection.)

- Are mediocre or poor in quality
- Are biased or portray stereotypes
- Are inappropriate in reading level
- Duplicate information which is no longer in heavy demand
- Are superseded by new or revised information
- Are outdated and unattractive format, design, graphics, and illustrations=
- Contain information which is inaccessible because they lack a table of contents, adequate indexing, and searching capabilities
- Are not selected in accordance with general selection criteria

Withdrawing Library Media Materials

Although the final decision to withdraw materials from the library media collection is one which is made by the library media specialist, subject area, grade level teachers, and other faculty members may be invited to review the items marked for withdrawal. All withdrawn materials must be sent to the Pulaski Warehouse /Distribution Center for recycling. Withdrawn materials should not be sent to classrooms; the same standard of quality applies to all other instructional materials within the school.

CONSIDERATION FILE

Library media specialists should maintain a CONSIDERATION FILE for future purchases. This file should reflect school needs, staff recommendations, and reviews. Technology has greatly enhanced the efficiency of creating consideration files, e.g., Follett's Titlewave. For items not available book jobbers who have online ordering and collection development, create a database to input ordering information for resources which are recommended for purchase and to output a list of resources to order. Some suggested database fields are: Title, author, publisher, copyright, review source, price.

Rebinding Procedures

Some books can be easily repaired by the library media specialist. If a book cannot be repaired locally, a decision must be made to rebind or reorder the book.

Rebinding is usually not an attractive or cost efficient option. Books that are rebound will have plain cloth covers without printed titles, illustrations, or book jackets. The

best candidates for rebinding are expensive reference books and textbooks which are updated and expected to stay in the collection. Out of print books should be carefully evaluated as to their merit before rebinding. Books which have dirty, torn or brittle pages should be reordered and not sent for rebinding.

The cost of rebinding will be billed to the local school library. The total expenditure must be deducted from the next year's library materials allotment. Although the cost of rebinding varies yearly according to the bid price, an average book can be estimated at 25% of the replacement cost.

The *REBOUND BOOK* form is issued yearly in late spring along with updated price list and instructions. Follow these procedures for books that need rebinding:

- Be sure that books meet the minimum binding requirements of 3/4" to 1" inside margin for optimum readability
- Remove circulation cards from books.
- Update Library Pro Automation software to provide a record of books sent for rebinding
- Box books for pickup in accordance with rebinding BCPS instructions
- Deduct the actual expenditure.

RECONSIDERATION of INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

When a concern is expressed about instructional materials or library media resources, the library media specialist needs to consider both the citizen's "right" to express a opinion and the principles of Intellectual Freedom. School library media specialists support the right of students, parents, or legal guardians to reject the appropriateness of materials for themselves or their child/ward.

The Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form is used to notify the Department of Curriculum and Instruction of an objection to information resources available in the library media center.

Responding to a Reconsideration Request

- Listen calmly and objectively.
- Explain briefly selection criteria/procedures established by Baltimore County Public Schools.
- Request the complainant to complete the [*Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials*](#) form The complainant is responsible for sending the completed form to the appropriate office as indicated.

- Advise the Office of Library and Information Technology of the resource in question and the nature of the complaint.
- Confer with the principal about the concern. Discuss the purpose and use of the resource, professional reviews, and the selection criteria/procedures. It is recommended that the item not be removed from the collection until the Materials Reconsideration Committee makes its decision.

The library media specialist and complainant will be informed of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction's committee action concerning the controversial material.

Form Only

**BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Towson, Maryland 21204**

**CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION
OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL**

Author: _____

Type of Instructional
Material: _____

Title: _____

Publisher (if
known): _____

Request initiated
by: _____ Telephone: _____

Street
Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Curriculum area and grade of
item:_____

Complainant
represents:_____

Please circle : self (name of organization) (identify other group)

1. To what in the item do you object? (Please be specific)

2. What do you feel might be the result of using this item?

3. For what age group would you recommend this item?

4. Do you feel there is any value in this item?

5. Did you examine the entire item?What parts?

6. Have you had an opportunity to discuss the proposed use of this item with a staff member?

Date _____

Signature of Complainant

Please send this request to:

Dr. Richard Bavaria
Executive Director
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Baltimore County Public Schools
6901 Charles Street
Towson, MD 21204

You will receive a response from: The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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FACULTY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER MATERIALS

[Form Only](#)

Teacher's Name _____ Date _____

Subject Area: _____ Grade Level: ___ Reading Level: ___

Curriculum Unit _____

Special Needs (Visually impaired, ESOL, G/T):

Type of media requested, e.g., book, video, computer software, CD-ROM

Please list specific recommendations:

- Author
- Title
- Type of Media
- Publisher/Producer
- Copyright Date

Review Source (if known)

Please list specific recommendations:

- Author
- Title
- Type of Media
- Publisher/Producer
- Copyright Date

Review Source (if known)

[Form only](#)

**STUDENT and PARENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER MATERIALS**

Name _____

Date _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

I would like materials on these subjects in the library media center:

I would like the following books in our library:

The library needs more information on the following subjects:

I would like to have the following nonprint or electronic resources in the library media center: