



MATERIAL SELECTION POLICY

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Material Selection Policy is to set broad guidelines in order to assemble, preserve, organize, administer, and promote the use of a wide range of communication media and to inform the public about the principles upon which selections are made. These functions are undertaken to further the objectives of the DeWitt District Library.

The DeWitt District Library acknowledges the Library's responsibility to provide materials which will meet the many and varied reading, viewing, and informational needs of the potential public it is to serve. When possible, the Library collection shall include representative materials for all races and nationalities, and all political, religious, economic, and social views.

The primary mission of the DeWitt District Library is that of a Popular Materials Library. Circulation, customer purchase requests from DeWitt District Library cardholders in good standing, and hold levels are the most important influences on the Library's collection. The Library will always attempt to anticipate and purchase high interest subjects and authors in sufficient quantities to meet the needs and interests of the community.

Inherent in the collection development philosophy is an appreciation for each customer of the DeWitt District Library. The Library believes that the determination of what material an individual chooses to use is a private matter, and no individual has the right to restrict the freedom of another to use material of his or her choice. The Library encourages the public to discuss with and recommend to the staff materials for acquisition. The Library upholds the right of the individual to access information, even though the content may be controversial, unorthodox, or unacceptable to others.

B. Definitions

The term "Library Materials" means books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, or other synonyms as they may occur in the policy having the widest possible meaning. This statement of policy applies to all Library Materials in the collection, including adult, young adult and juvenile. However, this policy and the term "Library Materials" does not apply to Internet sites available through the Library's computers or Internet collection. The Library has no control over the content of the Internet. Please see the Internet Use Policy for any issues related to computer or Internet Use. The term "selection" refers to the decision to add, retain or withdraw material in the collection. It does not refer to reader guidance.

C. Goals of Materials Selection

1. To meet the individual's need for information through maintenance of a well-balanced and broad collection of materials for information, reference, and research.
2. To help the individual attain maximum self-development through life-long intellectual and cultural growth.

3. To support the democratic process by providing materials for the education and enlightenment of the community.
4. To assist individuals in their pursuit of occupational activity and practical affairs.
5. To provide diverse recreational experience for individuals and groups.
6. To assist institutions of formal education with services that will assist individual study.
7. To maintain Michigan and local history collections.

D. Responsibility for Selection

The responsibility for selection lies with the professional staff of the Library. That staff operates within the areas of service to children, young adults, and adults. Both the general public and staff members may recommend materials for consideration. The ultimate responsibility for book selection, however, rests with the Library Director who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Board of Trustees. The Director shall be responsible for ensuring that the funds budgeted for collection development are allocated appropriately depending upon the needs of the Library and the fulfillment of the above Goals of Material Selection.

E. General Principles

1. Selection of Library Materials is based on the relationship of such work to the needs, interests and demands of the community. Basic to this policy is the Library Bill of Rights and the Intellectual Freedom Statement of the American Library Association to which this Library subscribes.
2. Selection is not made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval by patrons or Library users, but solely on the merits of a work, without regard to the race, nationality, political or religious view of the writer.
3. Responsibility for the reading matter of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection shall not be inhibited solely by the possibility that books may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

The Library respects each individual parent's right to supervise his children's choice of reading materials. However, the Library does not have the right to act in loco parentis (in place of the parent). Therefore, a parent who chooses to restrict the materials his children select must accompany those children when they use the collection in order to impose those restrictions.

4. Further, Library Materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of contents, and no catalogued book or other item will be sequestered, except for the express purpose of protecting it from injury or theft. The use of rare and scholarly items of great value may be controlled to the extent required to preserve them from harm, but no further.
5. It is the responsibility of the Library to provide circulating, reference and research materials for the general public and the student based on the services it is expected to perform.

F. Specific Principles for Selection

The following principles, individually or collectively, will prevail in the selection of all Library Materials. The total collection will attempt to represent a variety of points of view.

- Community needs, interest, relevance and demands
- Contemporary significance or permanent value
- Lack of bias, factual
- Portrays issues sensitively
- Literary, artistic, historical, scientific, or intellectual merit
- Recommendations of review from professional journals or publications of national repute
- Diversity of viewpoint and availability of other information on the subject
- Reputation, authority and qualifications of the author, illustrator, publisher, or producer
- Relation of work to existing collection
- Price, format, and ease of use
- Available shelf or storage space
- Availability of material through inter-library loan
- Popular demand: The Library will make an effort to have materials available which are in high demand by the public; however, selections by popular demand will still be guided by consideration of merit, use and the specific principles for selection.
- Duplication of materials already in the collection; i.e., purchase of additional copies of materials, shall be governed by intrinsic or historical value, or immediate need
- Collection objectives

G. Gifts

Acceptance of gifts shall be governed by the same principles and criteria applied to the selection of items for purchase. Gifts of books or other materials which do not comply with the Library's objectives and policies will be refused. No conditions may be imposed relating to any item either prior to or after its acceptance by the Library. All gifts and donated materials (including works of local authors) become the property of the Library. The manner of disposition of any materials which are not added to the collection will be decided by the Library.

H. Maintenance of the Collection

The collection shall be periodically examined for the purpose of eliminating obsolete, damaged, duplicate, or unneeded materials, and for binding or repair of materials, in order to maintain a balanced, attractive, and useful Library Materials collection.

I. Challenges to Materials

No material shall be removed from the Library's collection until all steps in the following process have been completed.

1. Patrons who object to particular Library Materials will be sent to the Director.

2. The Director will discuss the Library Materials in question with the patron, attempting to resolve the concern to both the patron's and Library's satisfaction.
3. If the patron wishes to carry the request further, the Director will provide the patron with a copy of the Materials Selection Policy, including the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials ("Request for Reconsideration").
4. Once a completed, signed copy of the Request for Reconsideration is received, the Library Director shall make a decision regarding the Request for Reconsideration, taking into consideration the Library's Materials Selection Policy and any other relevant information to reach a decision. The Director may consult with any other staff or consultants when making this decision.
5. The Library Director shall send the decision in writing to the complainant within 75 days of the receipt of the completed Request for Reconsideration form. If the decision is that the questioned material should be removed from the collection, the complainant will be notified in writing by the Library Director and all copies of the item will be withdrawn. If the decision is that the questioned material is to be retained, the complainant will be notified in writing by the Library Director that the material will be retained.
6. A written appeal of the Library Director's decision may be made by the requester to the Chair of the Library Board within ten (10) business days after the written decision is made by the Library Director. The Library Board will review any documentation it deems necessary to make a decision and render their decision within 60 days of receipt of the appeal. The Library Board may issue an additional extension if necessary to fully evaluate the material.
7. The Library Board serves as the final authority in cases involving retention or withdrawal of Library Materials.

J. Revision of this Policy

This policy shall be reviewed and revised to be consistent with the objectives of the Library.