

**MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT SUPPORT**

I. Objectives

The primary objective of school libraries is to implement, enrich and support the educational program of the school. In the area of materials selection, school libraries provide a wide range of materials on various levels of difficulty, with consideration for diversity and different points of view. These materials are also in nonbook formats and found on the internet. Therefore, school libraries should:

- A Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum by collaborating with instructional stakeholders and relevant data, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, learning needs, learning styles and maturity levels of the students served.
- B Provide materials for teachers and students based on their needs that encourage growth in knowledge, and that helps to develop literary, cultural and aesthetic appreciation and ethical standards.
- C Provide materials which reflect the broad ideas and beliefs of religious, social, political, historical, and ethnic groups and their contribution to the local, national and world heritages and cultures, thereby enabling students to develop intellectual integrity in forming sound judgments.
- D Provide a variety of print and nonprint formats to support needs-based student learning.
- E Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in selection of materials of the highest quality in order to ensure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the school library.

II. Authority and Responsibility

The Hawaii State Board of Education is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of Hawaii schools. [Department of Education Code, Policies & Regulations, Administration (1000 Series), Board of Education, Section 1200 -3.]

The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained personnel employed by the school system.

The Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support is responsible for developing and establishing criteria for evaluation and selection of school library materials. It will maintain bibliographic tools and establish guidelines and criteria for selection and coordination of elementary and secondary library materials, print and nonbook, including electronic formats.

At the school level, the selection of materials involves many people: school administrators, librarians, teachers, and students. Primary responsibility for coordinating the selection of materials and making the recommendations for purchase rests with school libraries personnel, subject to the approval of the principal.

III. Criteria for Evaluation and Selection of School Library Instructional Materials

A. General criteria to be considered are:

1. Needs of individual schools and students
 - a. Support curriculum needs;
 - b. Provide for a wide range of abilities, interests, and learning styles; and
 - c. Provide for informational and recreational needs
2. Needs of school professional staff

B. Other important considerations:

1. Accuracy
2. Attractive and appropriate format
3. Authoritativeness
4. Content is of appropriate depth and scope to meet intended purpose
5. Currentness
6. Durability
7. Freedom from stereotyping, e.g., sexism, racism, etc.
8. Interest and appeal
9. Medium validity
10. Organization
11. Presentation of different points of view
12. Price, including licensing fees
13. Quality of the writing/production
14. Readability/visual, audio, or technological effectiveness
15. Relevancy

16. Search modes for electronic media appropriate for user ability and interest level
17. Suitable style
18. Technical operation and design
19. Technical hardware requirements, including technical support and maintenance
20. User friendliness, especially with electronic media

C. Electronic and Internet Resources

Online databases and other electronic resources accessed via the internet should be evaluated using criteria for other nonbook resources, i.e. accuracy, authoritativeness, appropriateness, and user-friendliness. Fee structures, equipment needs, and technical support also need to be considered.

D. Controversial subjects

1. The material should be consistent with the purposes of the school library and relate to school program needs. Judgment should be based on the total effect of the material and not on the presence of words and phrases, or other visual and aural instances, which in themselves might be objectionable.
2. The Department of Education policy on controversial issues states that:
 - a. Student's discussion of issues, which generate opposing points of view, shall be considered a normal part of the learning process in every area of the school program. The depth of the discussion shall be determined by the maturity of the students.
 - b. Teachers shall refer students to resources reflecting all points of view. Discussions, including contributions made by the teacher or resource person, shall be maintained on an objective, factual basis. Stress shall be placed on learning how to make judgments based on facts. [Policies and Regulations, Instruction Series (2000), Section 2210.]

E. Gifts

Gifts should be evaluated by applying the same criteria used for selection of purchased materials.

F. Professional materials

These materials need to reflect research and trends in education, as well as meet general selection criteria.

G. Series

Materials within a series should be considered individually, since they might differ in quality.

H. Social concerns

1. Where it is needed for the curriculum, the collection should contain materials which present an objective picture of different problems and life styles though they may depict controversial behavior and use frank language.
2. Standard procedures for selection should be used for these materials.

IV. Procedures for Selection

A. Books

1. The school librarian should also refer to reputable, professionally prepared selection aids. Free, online resources are available from vendors such as Follett and Baker & Taylor on specific titles that include citations to review sources, and many include full-text reviews.
2. In selecting books, the librarian should evaluate the existing collection and consult reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids; collaborate with staff members from various departments and/or grade levels; and, if available, a committee appointed by the principal to serve in an advisory capacity in the selection of materials.

B. Nonbook and School Library Resources

1. The school librarian should consult reputable, professionally prepared selection aids for assistance. They may also consult various HCPS content area standards and appropriate DOE curriculum specialists.
2. In selecting these materials the librarian should evaluate the existing collection and consult professional selection aids; collaborate with staff members from various departments, or grade levels; and, if available,

a committee appointed by the principal to serve in an advisory capacity in the selection of materials.

V. Weeding

The same thought and care given to selection of materials should be exercised in weeding the collection so that the collection remains current and useful to the unique clientele it is meant to serve. The American Library Association recommends that 3% - 5% of the collection (print and nonbook) be weeded annually.

VI. Challenged Materials

The public, despite the care taken to select materials for student and teacher use, will make occasional objections to a selection. In such instances, the principles of the freedom to read and professional responsibility of the staff should be defended.

If a complaint is made, the procedures to follow are:

A. Inform the principal about the situation, and if it seems feasible, set up a conference with complainant, principal, librarian, and any other staff member involved in the complaint. Prior to the conference, consider contacting School Library Services (SLS) for advice on such matters as the following: 1) whether material has been reviewed and rating given the item; 2) whether there are possible sources of local and/or national reviews on material in question; and 3) suggestions SLS specialists might have regarding the upcoming conference. In this initial stage, school staff should try to explain to the complainant:

1. The school's selection procedure, criteria, and qualifications of those persons selecting the material; and
2. The particular place the material occupies in the educational program, its intended educational usefulness, and additional information regarding its use.

(Note: The vast majority of complaints can be amicably resolved in the first stages. A personal conference can often solve the problem where a shift into a more formal procedure might inflate it.)

B. Should the complainant still not be satisfied, invite the person to file objections in writing and offer to send him or her the following attached

forms: *Patron Request For Reevaluation Of Instructional Materials: Book and Nonbook* and *Patron Request For Reevaluation Of Instructional Online Electronic Resources*.

- C. Determine whether the material may be sufficiently questionable to warrant its immediate withdrawal pending a decision.
- D. Should the situation not be resolved at the school level, the complainant should be referred to the respective complex office.
- E. Should the complainant not be satisfied with the Complex Area Superintendent's decision, the matter should be referred to the Assistant Superintendent, Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support. The Assistant Superintendent will refer the matter to the appropriate specialist for study and recommendations. Specialists will read, examine, and/or reconsider the material in question and report their findings to the Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent will then respond to the complainant and try to resolve the matter.
- F. Should the complainant insist on taking the matter further, the Assistant Superintendent would then report to the Superintendent who will present staff recommendations to the Board of Education for a final decision.

