POLICY MANUAL

Ipswich Public Schools

FILE CODE: IIAC

SELECTION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS

The Ipswich School Committee is legally responsible for all matters relating to the operation of the Ipswich Public Schools, including the library. The school committee subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement and the School Library Bill of Rights. The responsibility for the coordination and selection of library resources is delegated to the professional librarians/media persons employed by the school system. Recommendation of resources may involve many people: principals, supervisors, teachers, students, parents and laypersons.

OBJECTIVES OF SELECTION

The primary objective of the school’s library is to implement, enrich and support the educational program of the school. It is the responsibility of the library to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the presentation of different points of view. The functions of the library are:

1. To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the students served.

2. To provide materials that will stimulate growth of knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.

3. To provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.

4. To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that students may develop, under guidance, the ability to analyze all media critically.

5. To provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.

6. To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection, appropriate for the users of the school library.
CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

Needs of the school based on knowledge of the curriculum, teacher and student needs, and of the existing collection are given first consideration. Materials for purchase are considered on the basis of:

- overall purpose
- timeliness and permanence
- importance of the subject matter
- quality of the writing or production
- readability and popular appeal
- authoritativeness
- reputation of the producer or publisher
- reputation and significance of the author, artist, etc.
- format and price

SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF RESOURCES

1. **Nonfiction Books**

   These books will be purchased to supplement and enrich the curriculum. The departments that use the library the most, such as English, social studies, science, and math will be well represented. Every effort will be made to purchase books that meet the needs of students in terms of the curriculum. Books are also purchased to provide for the recreational interests of the students. Books that supplement new courses in the curriculum will be given special consideration to establish a core of books for those courses.

2. **Fiction Books**

   The best of current fiction is purchased in both hardcover and paperback formats. The Best Books of the Year lists are consulted for the best in young adult fiction and appropriate adult fiction.

3. **Reference Materials**

   Encyclopedias, atlases and other reference materials are an essential part of every library. They appear in several media forms. Many reference materials are in serial form and must be maintained continuously to be useful. Reference materials must be current, reliable and in appropriate forms for the information they need to convey.
4. **Periodicals**

   Magazines and newspapers have two purposes in the library collection. They serve as research sources on current events and for recreational reading. Indexed access periodicals is an important facet for their usefulness. Evaluation of their purchase/subscription in on-line, CD-ROM or traditional format should be made and continuation of subscriptions is essential.

5. **Audiovisual Materials**

   Audio-visual and computerized materials will be previewed or evaluated through reviews before purchase. Their primary purpose is to support the curriculum. Materials that will be used most frequently will be given preference to those materials that have limited use.

**PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION**

In selecting materials for purchase, the librarians/media persons will evaluate the existing collection and consult the following:

1. Reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids including book lists, special bibliographies, current reviewing media, etc., such as publications of the American Library Association, National Council of Teachers of English, H. W. Wilson Catalog Series, and the publications of other professional educational organizations.

2. Subject specialists and other educators.

3. Media or curriculum committees, which serve in an advisory capacity in the selection of materials.

4. Requests from students and teachers.

In specific areas, the librarian/media person uses the following procedures:

1. Gift materials are judged by basic selection standards, and are accepted or rejected by these standards.
2. Multiple copies are purchased as needed.

3. Worn or missing standard items are replaced systematically.

4. Out of date or no longer useful materials are withdrawn from the collection.

CHALLENGED MATERIALS

Occasionally, objections to a selection will be made by the public, despite the care taken to select valuable materials for student and teacher use. If a complaint is made, procedures should be as follows:

1. The librarian/media person should be courteous, but make no commitments.

2. The individual lodging the complaint is asked to file objections in writing and offer a prepared form such as a Citizen’s Request for Reconsideration of Educational Material, so that a formal complaint may be submitted.

3. The principal and the media personnel then review the questioned material.

4. The written complaint, together with reviews and recommendations, is submitted to the superintendent.

5. The superintendent, after reviewing the complaint and recommendations, makes his/her decision.

6. The superintendent informs the complainant, in writing, of the decision. Copies of the written decision and all pertinent material are forwarded to the school committee, the principal and the library/media person.

7. If the decision requires further consideration, the superintendent schedules an interview with the complainant, the principal and the library/media person.

8. If the issue is not resolved at this level, the complainant may appeal the decision to the school committee.

9. The school committee may elect to hear the complainant, with the principal and library/media person present.

10. A committee may be appointed by the school committee specifically to review the particular materials in question.
11. The school committee will determine the disposition of the resources in question based upon the report of the review committee and the reports previously submitted.

12. The complainant will be informed, in writing, by the school committee of its decision. The complainant is further apprised of additional avenues of appeal.

(Adapted from the publication of the American Association of School Librarians)

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