

# Mission - Providence Career & Technical Academy Library

The mission of the Providence Career & Technical Academy Library is to provide information, assistance, teaching, materials, technology, and space to support and supplement the curriculum of Providence Career & Technical Academy Library and to serve the individual educational, social, emotional, and recreational needs of the Providence Career & Technical Academy community.

## Intellectual Freedom

The School Libraries of Providence Public School District (PPSD) are guided by the principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretative statements, including "Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program" and The Students' Right to Read statement of the National Council of Teachers of English. See Appendix (in this policy) for supporting documents.

## PPSD School Library Selection Policy Objectives

- To provide school community members with materials that enrich and support the curriculum and meet the needs of the students and faculty served
- To support that research needs of students and faculty conducting independent and advanced research
- To provide students with a wide range of educational materials on all levels of difficulty and in a variety of formats, with diversity of appeal, allowing for the presentation of many different points of view
- To select materials that present various sides of controversial issues, giving students an opportunity to develop analytical and information literacy skills to make informed decisions
- To select materials in all formats, including up-to-date, high quality, varied literature to develop and strengthen a love of reading

## Selection Policy

The School Board shall delegate to the Superintendent the authority and responsibility for selection of library materials in all formats. Responsibility for actual selection rests with professionally certified Library Media Specialists using the board's adopted selection criteria and procedures.

### Selection Criteria:

The Providence Public School Library Media Specialists are responsible for the selection of materials. Materials shall be chosen by the Library Media Specialist in cooperation with faculty, staff, and students. Materials selected will meet the following criteria:

- Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests and their educational, emotional, and recreational needs
- Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format
- Be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, emotional development, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected
- Incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources
- Earn favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel

- Exhibit a high degree of potential user appeal and interest
- Represent differing viewpoints on controversial issues to promote users to engage in critical analysis, to explore their own beliefs, attitudes, and behavior, and to make intelligent judgments in their everyday lives
- Provide a global perspective and promote diversity by including materials by authors and illustrators of all cultures
- Include a variety of resources in physical and virtual formats including print and non-print such as electronic and multimedia (including subscription databases and other online products, e-books, educational games, and other forms of emerging technologies)
- Demonstrate physical format, appearance, and durability suitable to their intended use
- Balance cost with need

**The following professional resources assist the Library Media Specialists in the selection process; however, selection is not limited to the use of these tools:**

- Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) Notable Children's Books
- Booklist
- Rhode Island Teen Book Awards
- School Library Journal
- We Need Diverse Books website
- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Best Books for Young Adults

For further information on library selection policies in general, please see the following ALA documents:

[Collection Development Tools](#)

[Diverse Collection](#)

## Acquisitions Procedures

To aid the selection of learning resources that meet the Providence Public School Selection Policy, professional personnel will evaluate available resources and curriculum needs and will consult reputable, professionally prepared aids to selection, and other appropriate sources. The actual resource will be examined whenever possible.

Recommendations for purchase involve administrators, teachers, students, district personnel, and community members, as appropriate.

Gift materials shall be judged by the Selection Criteria and shall be accepted or rejected by those criteria.

Selection is an ongoing process that should include removing materials that are no longer used or needed, adding materials, and replacing lost and worn materials that still have educational value.

## Library Special Collections

Special collections in individual school libraries reflect the mission of the schools. School-specific selection policies may supplement the district-wide selection policy in order to help schools with specialized curriculums or individualized missions develop special collections that support those areas.

## Selection of Materials on Controversial Topics

The Providence Public School Department School Board subscribes to the principles expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. It is the responsibility of the Providence Public School district to provide a wide range of materials on different levels of difficulty and representing different points of view. School library professional staff will provide materials on opposing viewpoints on controversial issues to enable students to develop essential critical thinking skills, to be effective users of information, and to become productive members of society.

## Library Gifts and Donations

Gifts and donations to individual school libraries are accepted with the understanding that the decision for use and disposition of the materials and/or funds will be determined using the same selection criteria as purchased materials. All materials should support the curriculum and needs of library users. Gifts and donations, like purchased resources, will be removed from the collection at the end of their useful life.

## Library Collection Maintenance and Weeding

The Providence Public School Department recognizes the importance of maintaining a collection of current, appropriate, and useful materials in school libraries. Therefore, a periodic evaluation of the collection will be performed in order to remove or replace materials and equipment that are no longer useful. The inventory can be used to determine losses and remove damaged or worn materials which can then be considered for replacement. The inventory can also be used to deselect and remove materials that are no longer relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students.

The following guidelines have been developed to aid in the weeding process; however, the School Library Media Specialist will make the final decision about the removal or replacement of library materials.

## Weeding Guidelines:

### Weeding by Appearance:

- Worn-out volumes: dirty, brittle, yellow pages; missing pages; tattered covers; etc.
- Badly bound volumes: soft, pulpy paper and/or shoddy binding
- Badly printed works
- Books of antiquated appearance which might discourage use
- Audio-visual materials with missing or broken pieces
- Weeding of Superfluous or Duplicate Volumes
- Unneeded duplicate titles
- Older editions
- Highly specialized books (when library holds more general or up-to-date volumes on the same subject)
- Books on subjects of little interest to the local community
- Books which no longer relate to the curriculum (if specialized)

### Weeding Based on Content:

- Information is dated
- Information is inaccurate
- Book is poorly written

### Weeding According to Use

- Nonfiction: Book has not been checked out within last 10 years
- Fiction: Book has not been checked out within last 5 years (classics excluded)
- Categories of Books which may be quickly outdated:
  - 000s: computer
  - 100s: psychology (especially popular literature)
  - 300s: college & career materials
  - 400s: grammars with dated examples and/or illustrations
  - 500s: astronomy, chemistry, physics, biology
  - 600s: electronics, engineering, health, technology
  - 900s: popular biographies
- Mistakes in selection/acquisition
- Categories of Books which are not quickly outdated:
  - dictionaries
  - biographical sources
  - literary criticism
  - classics of literature
  - foreign language literature
  - art books
  - local history/geography
  - books providing general principles of a subject or discipline

## Online Information Policy

Providing access to information is essential to the mission of the Library. As part of that access, the Library provides Internet access to information beyond the selected collection. The Internet allows immediate access to timely and comprehensive information, as well as a wide variety of primary sources. Providing connections to global information services and networks outside the library is different from selecting and purchasing materials for the library collection. The Internet changes rapidly, frequently, and unpredictably.

As the vast amount of information on the Internet is generated outside the library, the library cannot be responsible for accuracy, authenticity, currency, availability, or completeness of information. We cannot ensure that Internet communications are secure or private.

Because of the library's limitations, the user is responsible for using discretion when considering the quality of material, questioning the validity of information, and choosing what is individually appropriate. As a part of the Rhode Island School Library Curriculum, Library Media Specialists teach students essential skills to evaluate information and search strategies to locate appropriate information online. In addition, as students visit the library to conduct research, Library Media Specialists works one-on-one to informally train students how to use the Internet in a responsible and discriminating manner.

PPSD Libraries also provide guidance to web resources through individual Library web sites available on schools' home pages.

For further information on the Library Online Information Policy, please see the following ALA policy statements:

- [Access to Digital Resources and Services](#)

# Reconsideration of Materials

## Guiding Principles for Reconsideration of Library Materials:

- To serve a wide range of users, Libraries provide access to diverse materials that reflect differing points of view. The Library's mission is to provide access to information to all users.
- All library users have a First Amendment right to read, view, and listen to library resources.
- The Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association can be used as guiding documents.
- Any person has the right to express concerns about library resources and expect to have the objection taken seriously.
- When library resources are reconsidered, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view are defended rather than specific materials.
- A questioned item will be considered in its entirety, not judged solely on portions taken out of context.
- Parents or guardians have the right to guide the reading, viewing, and listening of their children but must give the same right to other parents/guardians.
- Questioned items will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process.
- The reconsideration process should be completed in its entirety and not subverted or ended prematurely, leaving the library open to legal challenge.

## School Library Reconsideration Policy

Library resources are selected by qualified, certified School Library Media Specialists using a clear selection process outlined in the PPSD Selection Policy, however objections to library resources that are deemed offensive or inappropriate may occur. Any resident, employee, or student of the school district may express an informal concern or formal request for reconsideration of a library resource.

## Procedures for Handling Informal Complaints

Persons with a complaint about library print or digital resources should state their concerns to the local School Library Media Specialist or Principal. The School Library Media Specialist or Principal will listen attentively to the concerns and attempt to resolve the issue informally. As part of the discussion, the school employee will explain the library's selection policy, selection criteria, diversity of the collection with resources from many points of view, and the selection process. Additionally, each parent/guardian has the right to determine the appropriateness of library resources for their children and should accord the same right to other families.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the School Library Media Specialist or Principal will explain the formal reconsideration process and provide the individual with a copy of the school district's library selection policy with reconsideration procedures and a request for reconsideration of library resources form. If there is concern about multiple items, a separate form must be completed for each item. All complaints to staff members shall be reported to the building principal, whether received by telephone, letter, or in personal conversation. No Library resources will be removed or restricted from use as a result of the informal complaint.

If the completed and signed formal request for reconsideration form has not been received by the Principal within two weeks, the matter shall be considered closed.

# Procedures for Handling Formal Complaints

The following procedures should be followed if, after discussing the questioned resource, no resolution is made.

1. The complainant should be referred to the local Principal.
2. A concerned citizen who is dissatisfied with earlier informal discussions will be offered a packet of materials which includes the Library's mission statement, PPSD Library Selection Policy, request for reconsideration of instructional resources form, and the Library Bill of Rights.
3. The complainant is required to complete and submit the reconsideration form to the Principal within ten business days.
4. If a completed reconsideration form is not submitted within ten business days, the matter is considered closed.
5. Upon receipt of the form, the Principal should notify and provide a copy of the reconsideration form with the following individuals:
  - Superintendent
  - School Library Advisory Committee/Reconsideration Committee
  - School Library Media Specialist
  - School Library Department Supervisor/Supervisor of K-12 Reading
6. The work in question will remain on library shelves and in circulation until a formal decision is made.
7. The Reconsideration Committee will be appointed by the Principal and consist of a Teacher, a Building Level Administrator, a School Library Media Specialist, a Reading Specialist or Language Arts Teacher, and a Member of the community. In a high school setting, the community member should be a student.
8. The School Library Media Specialist will secure copies of the resource for the committee to review in its entirety.
9. The School Library Media Specialist will provide the reviewing committee with a short formal Intellectual Freedom training that explains a packet of materials, which includes the Library's mission statement, PPSD Library Selection Policy, the Library Bill of Rights, the completed reconsideration form, reviews of the resource being reconsidered, and a list of awards or honors, if any. This packet should be created with assistance from the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Rhode Island Library Association, and the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom.
10. Through interlibrary loan or other means, the School Library Media Specialist will obtain copies of the material in question for review by the Reconsideration Committee.
11. The Reconsideration Committee (including the School Library Media Specialist) should schedule a formal reconsideration meeting within 10 school days after the Principal receives the written request for reconsideration. The Principal should notify the Superintendent and the School Library Department Supervisor/Supervisor of K-12 Reading as to this schedule.
12. The school level Reconsideration Committee should follow the procedures listed as follows:
  - a. At the initial meeting, the Principal and Committee will review reconsideration committee guidelines and procedures. A School Administrator should fully participate in the reconsideration process.
  - b. A member of the Committee should keep minutes.
  - c. All committee members should fully review the resource (read or view the entire work) before voting.
  - d. The Committee reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision-making process.

- e. The complainant may make an initial verbal presentation about the resource under reconsideration or may choose to share the written form. The complainant is asked to provide sources for quotes used during this presentation.
  - f. The complainant may not participate in or observe the Committee's deliberations unless invited to do so by the committee. The Committee chair may choose to give committee members time to ask questions.
  - g. During the initial or subsequent meetings, the Committee will make its decision determined by the simple majority to retain, move the resources to a different level, or remove the resource. This will be a secret ballot vote.
  - h. The Committee's written decision (including a minority report if needed) shall be presented to the complainant, the Superintendent of schools, and the School Library Department Supervisor/Supervisor of K-12 Reading within five school days after the decision is made.
  - i. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision at the school level, a written appeal can be made within 10 school days to a system-level Educational Resource Reconsideration Committee. This request should be delivered to the Superintendent of schools.
13. The District-Level Reconsideration Committee will consider any appeals from the school level. The committee will be appointed by the Superintendent or his/her designee as follows:
- School Library Department Supervisor/Supervisor of K-12 Reading
  - Director of elementary, middle, or secondary education, as appropriate
  - Curriculum coordinator specializing in reading from the appropriate level
  - District-level Library services staff
  - School Library Media Specialist from the appropriate level
  - Other district-level instructional directors
  - A student from the level in which the challenged material resides (middle or high school level only)
14. The organization of the District-Level Reconsideration Committee will be as follows:
- a. Policy, committee guidelines, and procedures should be reviewed at each meeting.
  - b. The Chairperson will be the School Library Media Specialist or School Library Department Supervisor/Supervisor of K-12 Reading. The secretary of the committee will be elected at each meeting.
  - c. The Chairperson will be the spokesperson for the committee at all meetings and before the Board of Education when decisions are made.
  - d. The secretary will record the minutes and decisions of the meetings.
  - e. These should be filed with the Chairperson, who will communicate decisions in writing to the superintendent. Meetings will be called at the discretion of the chairperson or when an appeal is requested by a complainant.
15. The procedures for the District-Level Reconsideration Committee will be as follows:
- a. The Chairperson will call the meeting within ten school days after the written appeal is filed with the Superintendent.
  - b. The Committee shall read and/or examine the challenged resource, read the written reconsideration form, and read copies of the professionally prepared reviews and list of awards provided by the School Library Media Specialist on the committee. The Chairperson should forward these materials to the Committee members at least three days prior to the meeting. The procedures for these meetings are the same as those for the school-level meeting.
16. The procedures for an appeal to the Board of Education will be as follows:
- a. An appeal of the decision made by the District-Level Reconsideration Committee must be made in writing to the Superintendent within ten days of the system-level Committee decision.
  - b. A decision on the complaint will be made at the next regular meeting or special meeting within 30 days of the written request to the Superintendent.

- c. The board reserves the right to use outside expertise if necessary to help in its decision making.
- d. The Chairperson for the District-Level Reconsideration Committee will present the Committee's decision to the board.
- e. The complainant or designee will present the petitioner's position.
- f. The board decision will be final, and the superintendent will implement the decision.
- g. Decisions on reconsidered materials will stand for five years before new requests for reconsideration of those items will be entertained.

## Appendix

The following resources were used as a model in the development of these policies:

- [Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries](#)
- [University Laboratory High School Collection Development Policy](#)
- [New York City Selection Policy Guide](#)

The Providence Public School Department subscribes in principle to the philosophy expressed in the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and its supporting documents, and the American Association of School Librarians' School Library Bill of Rights for School Library Media Programs. Copies of these documents are appended to and made a part of this policy:

### [First Amendment](#)

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

### [Library Bill of Rights](#)

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

### [Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)

The school library plays a unique role in promoting, protecting, and educating about intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shape the resources and services of a school library, the principles of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights apply equally to all libraries, including school libraries. Under these principles, all students have equitable access to library facilities, resources, and instructional programs.

### [Code of Ethics of the American Library Association](#)

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.



## [Freedom to Read Statement](#)

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

## [The Students' Right to Read statement of the National Council of Teachers of English](#)

The Students' Right to Read provides resources that can be used to help discuss and ensure students' free access to all texts. The genesis of the Students' Right to Read was an original Council statement, "Request for Reconsideration of a Work," prepared by the Committee on the Right to Read of the National Council of Teachers of English and revised by Ken Donelson. The current Students' Right to Read statement represents an updated second edition that builds on the work of Council members dedicated to ensuring students the freedom to choose to read any text and opposing "efforts of individuals or groups to limit the freedom of choice of others." Supported through references from text challenges and links to resources, this statement discusses the history and dangers of text censorship which highlight the breadth and significance of the Students' Right to Read. The statement then culminates in processes that can be followed with different stakeholders when students' reading rights are infringed.

# School Library Request for Reconsideration of Material Form

The Providence Public School Department School Board has delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library/educational resources to the school library professional staff/curriculum committee, and has established reconsideration procedures to address concerns about those resources. Completion of this form is the first step in those procedures. If you wish to request reconsideration of school or library resources, please return the completed form to the local Principal or Supervisor of School Libraries and K-12 Reading.

Office of Teaching and Learning  
Providence Public Schools  
797 Westminster Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent self?  Or an organization?

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

- Book (e-book)  Movie  Magazine  Database  Audio  Digital Resource  Textbook  
 App  Newspaper  Game  Streaming Media  Other

Title of Resource: \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

Is the resource part of the curriculum, library collection, or other? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

4. What concerns you about the resource?

---

---

---

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

---

---

---

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?

---

---

---

Your Signature: \_\_\_\_\_