

Evaluation and Selection of School Library Materials

Comparison of New Board Policy 04-0024-000, December 10, 2024 version and March 10, 2025 version

December 2024	Revision March 2025
<p><u>A. Policy Purpose</u> Addition to focus on age-appropriate and professional review sources.</p>	
<p>The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.05.04.02, <i>et seq.</i>) and the Maryland State Standards for School Library Media Programs specify that students and staff shall have access to “appropriate materials and technologies to support the instructional programs of the local school system.” The purpose of this policy is to affirm the commitment of Harford County Public Schools (“HCPS”) to follow guidance and expectations set by the Maryland State Department of Education (“MSDE”) as well as applicable laws concerning the implementation of a unified school media library program and the selection and approval of library media materials. The purpose of this policy is also to affirm HCPS’s commitment to adherence to its procedure regarding Evaluation and Selection of School Library Materials, available at https://www.hcps.org/departments/docs/Curriculum/LibraryMedia/Procedure_Evaluation_and_Selection_of_School_Library_Materials.pdf</p>	<p>The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.05.04.02, <i>et seq.</i>) and the Maryland State Standards for School Library Media Programs specify that students and staff shall have access to “appropriate materials and technologies to support the instructional programs of the local school system.” The purpose of this policy is to affirm the commitment of Harford County Public Schools (“HCPS”) to follow guidance and expectations set by the Maryland State Department of Education (“MSDE”) as well as applicable laws concerning library media programs. This policy establishes frameworks for the selection, evaluation, and reconsideration of library materials that ensure age-appropriate, professionally reviewed resources supporting both curricular needs and student interests. The purpose of this policy is also to affirm HCPS’s commitment to adherence to its procedure regarding the Evaluation and Selection of School Library Materials, available at https://www.hcps.org/departments/docs/Curriculum/LibraryMedia/Procedure_Evaluation_and_Selection_of_School_Library_Materials.pdf</p>
<p><u>B. 1. Policy Statement:</u> Revised last phrase</p>	
<p>HCPS recognizes that library media instruction is an essential part of students’ K-12 educational experience. School library media programs provide all students and staff members with equal and timely access to</p>	<p>HCPS recognizes that library media instruction is an essential part of students’ K-12 educational experience. School library media programs provide all students and staff members with access to ideas, information,</p>

ideas and information.	and instructional resources.
<p><u>2. Policy Statement</u> Reworded.</p>	
<p>HCPS is committed to the success and achievement of each and every student which means providing students with equitable access to high quality, culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, academic support, and extracurricular opportunities in environments that are equitable, safe, diverse, and inclusive. Through an integrated program, school library media specialists ensure that their students will be college and career ready for the 21st century.</p>	<p>HCPS maintains its commitment to the success and achievement of each student by providing equitable access to high-quality instruction. Through integrated library programs, HCPS supports college and career readiness while ensuring access to educational resources.</p>
<p><u>3. Policy Statement</u> Moved statement #4 to #3: no changes</p>	
<p>HCPS has established and shall maintain a unified school media library program in accordance with State law and regulation as well as any other relevant federal and state laws and regulations.</p>	<p>HCPS has established and shall maintain a unified school media library program in accordance with State law and regulation as well as any other relevant federal and state laws and regulations.</p>
<p><u>4. Policy Statement</u> Moved Statement #5 to #4: no changes</p>	
<p>School library media specialists are delegated with the responsibility for the review, evaluation, and selection of materials to develop the school library media collection utilizing guidelines found in the selection and evaluation administrative procedure.</p>	<p>School library media specialists are delegated with the responsibility for the review, evaluation, and selection of materials to develop the school library media collection utilizing guidelines found in the selection and evaluation administrative procedure.</p>
<p><u>Deleted Policy Statement</u> Emphasis on students having access to resources which is addressed in #1</p>	
<p>HCPS is also committed to ensuring that students have access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment and appropriate academic, social, and economic supports are in place so that personal and social identifiers are not barriers or obstacles to accessing educational opportunities. Elementary and Secondary</p>	

<p>library media curriculum are designed to meet each group’s appropriate needs, with current curriculum information available on the HCPS website’s “Library/ Media” page.</p>	
<p><u>5. Policy Statement</u> Summarized in paragraph with a focus on key features; details covered in procedure.</p>	
<p>School libraries shall have a well-balanced collection of library materials considering the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports the assessed curricular needs, reflecting the identified learning outcomes of the instructional program; • Supports the informational needs and interest of students; • Appropriateness for recommended level (elementary, middle, high); • Includes a variety of formats; • Earns favorable reviews in professional review sources and favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by library professionals; • Assessed for currency of information as related to content and purpose with consideration of recent copyright date as appropriate to the subject; • Assessed for accuracy in content where facts are presented objectively with consideration given to the authority of the author, organization, and publisher/ producer; • Provides a global perspective and promotes diversity as a positive attribute of our society; • Represents differing viewpoints providing students access to a variety of resources to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. 	<p>HCPS library collections shall be developed and maintained with careful attention to several key factors. Materials must support curricular needs, instructional programs, general interest, information, and inquiry while maintaining appropriateness for their recommended grade level, whether elementary, middle, or high school. The currency and accuracy of information receive careful consideration, as does the presence of professional reviews. Collections should reflect a balance of perspectives, incorporate various formats with accessibility considerations, and support the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.</p>
<p><u>6. Policy Statement</u> Added a statement to focus on the key elements of selection: favorable reviews and age-</p>	

appropriate guidelines.	
	Material selection requires two key elements: favorable reviews from established professional sources and grade-level appropriateness. All materials must be recommended by at least two recognized professional review sources for the intended age group. Selection decisions shall consider the educational, literary, and/or artistic merit of the complete work; while following established guidelines that address the developmental needs and age-appropriate content for elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high school (9-12) students
<u>7. Policy Statement</u> Added a statement to focus on the gifts and donations as this was a theme in the feedback.	
	The handling of gifts and donations follows specific guidelines. All donated materials undergo evaluation using the same criteria as purchased library materials and must comply with Policy 0031-000: <i>Solicitation and Acceptance of External Funds and Other Resources</i> . The district reserves the right to decline or remove donated materials based on established criteria.
<u>8. Policy Statement</u> Added more detail to the purpose and process of the reconsideration committee.	
A reconsideration process, led by the Reconsideration Committee, shall be followed to address concerns or objections regarding specific items in the library collection. The current reconsideration process shall be publicly available at hcps.org.	<p>A formal reconsideration process exists for reviewing challenged materials. The reconsideration process shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a uniform process for submitting objections accessible to students, parents/guardians, and school personnel • Establish reasonable timelines for conducting and concluding reviews • Operate through a representative committee that reflects the diversity of the school community • Evaluate challenged materials based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work as a whole, not isolated passages • The author's purpose and intent

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contemporary community standards for the intended student age group• Educational value and developmental appropriateness• Professional reviews and critical assessments• Consider whether the material has literary, artistic, educational, or scientific value for its intended audience• Provide a clear appeals process through the Superintendent and the President of the Board of Education• Maintain transparency through public availability at hcps.org of reconsideration documentation
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