

POLICY

POLICY TITLE: EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF SCHOOL LIBRARY MATERIALS		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE:	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED:	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED:
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY:		

A. **Policy Purpose**

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.05.04.02, *et seq.*) 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

B. **Policy Statement**

1. 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, and instructional resources.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. HCPS library collections shall be developed and maintained with careful attention to several key factors. Materials must support curricular needs, instructional programs,

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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.

6. 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.
7. 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: *Solicitation and Acceptance of External Funds and Other Resources*. The district reserves the right to decline or remove donated materials based on established criteria.
8. A formal reconsideration process exists for reviewing challenged materials. The reconsideration process shall:
 - 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:
 - The work as a whole, not isolated passages
 - The author's purpose and intent
 - 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

Board Approval Acknowledged By:

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Policy Action Dates		
ACTION DATE	ACTION DATE	ACTION DATE
Adopted		

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References	
LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME:	JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER:
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:	JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE:
DESIGNEE NAME:	JOB POSITION OF DESIGNEE:
POLICY NUMBER PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2005:	

LEGAL REFERENCES¹

References are set forth in the Evaluation and Selection of School Library Materials Procedure.