



## **POLICY - SELECTION**

### **I. Mission**

The mission of the Dane County Library Service, as stated in its Plan of Service, follows:

The Dane County Library Service is dedicated to providing library services for all residents of Dane County's towns, and the villages of Blue Mounds, Brooklyn, Cottage Grove, Dane, Maple Bluff, Rockdale, and Shorewood Hills.

### **II. Programs of Service**

All programs of service maintained by the Dane County Library Service are dependent on continued access to the library's collections of materials. These include:

- A. Bookmobile Service. Those residents who do not have easy access to the seventeen municipal libraries in the county are served by the county bookmobile service.
- B. Day Care Service. This program provides monthly deliveries of age-appropriate library books and thematic curriculum kits to licensed and registered day care providers in the service area of the Dane County Library Service.
- C. Outreach Services. This program is designed to provide library service and materials to users with special needs, including the elderly, physically handicapped, visually impaired, functionally illiterate, and homebound. Adequate services to this population depend on a collection of large print and other programming materials to meet the demands of the extensive deposit collections placed in institutions and libraries throughout the county.
- D. Readmobile Service. A service targeted to neighborhoods that experience multiple barriers to library use, this program requires a neighborhood partner to provide a facility for regular visits. It is dependent on a collection of materials designed to introduce early literacy skills to children, as well as materials especially appropriate to those with limited English, those proficient in languages other than English, and high-interest, low level reading materials developed for reluctant readers.

### **III. Responsibility for Material Selection**

The ultimate responsibility for selection of materials rests with the library director who operates within the framework of this policy established by the Dane County Library Board. This responsibility is shared with other members of the library service staff; however, because the director must be able to answer to the Library Board and the general public for actual selections made by other members of the staff, she/he has the authority to reject or select any item contrary to the recommendation of the staff.

### **IV. Criteria for Selection of Materials**

Involved in the choice of materials are the experience and knowledge of those staff members selecting materials, their familiarity with the anticipated user population, the demands on the existing collection, the presence of other library resources, and the limitations of the library's budget.

Materials are judged on the basis of the work as a whole, not on a part taken out of context. Reviews in professional journals are used in the selection process and are sought whenever possible. However, the lack of a review or an unfavorable review shall not be that sole reason for rejecting a title which is in demand. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the same criteria.

#### **A. Print**

The criteria for the selection of non-fiction are as follows:

1. Qualification of the author in the subject field
2. Scope and authority of the subject matter
3. Quality of writing (style, readability)
4. Appeal/Demand
5. Date of publication
6. Reputation of publisher
7. Organization of content (indices, bibliographies, etc.)
8. Relationship to the existing collection
9. Availability of material from another loaning source
10. Physical qualities (binding, print size, illustrations, margins, etc.)
11. Price

The criteria for the selection of fiction include:

1. Literary Merit
2. Appeal/Demand
3. Characterization (constructive, realistic portrayal of characters)
4. Style
5. Relationship to the collection
6. Availability of material from another loaning source
7. Reputation of the publisher
8. Physical Qualities
9. Price

#### **B. Audiovisual and Electronic Materials**

The library selects materials in a variety of formats. The library selects primarily to meet the browsing needs of the bookmobile user and the programming needs of participating institutions.

The library uses the services of the Wisconsin Library Services (WiLS), to trial available electronic databases and to purchase ones deemed appropriate. The library also participates in the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium, contributing its fair share of annual funding to purchase electronic books and other material, which is then made available to our residents.

Criteria for selection of audiovisual materials include:

1. Need/demand for the material based on requests and holdings
2. Quality of interpretation and technique
3. Importance of the artist or the literary value of the work
4. Technical quality of the recording
5. Price

Criteria for selecting electronic resources include:

1. Accuracy and objectivity
2. Timeliness
3. Scope

4. Relationship to existing collection
5. Community interests and demand
6. Price

### **C. Materials for specific audiences**

#### 1. Adult and Young Adult.

Items in the adult collection are selected primarily for persons 14 years of age and older. Selection is as broad in scope as the interests of the residents of Dane County. Besides aiming at variety and depth in content, it must recognize a wide range of reading abilities.

Through carefully chosen materials, young adults are introduced to the Library's complete resources and are encouraged to continue using them. Materials which help young adults understand themselves and others, broaden their viewpoints and knowledge of the world, stimulate their curiosity, and expand both their reading ability and reading enjoyment will be sought. Emphasis will be on popular browsing materials, rather than on school-related materials.

#### 2. Children.

In selecting materials for children, the objective is to make available a collection that satisfies the informational, recreational and cultural reading needs and potentials for children from pre-school age to age 14. Books and other materials are included which meet the general demands of the majority of children along with special needs or talents. Children have full access to adult and young adult materials both on the bookmobile and through interlibrary loan. Responsibility for the reading of children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection of material will not be inhibited by the possibility that books may come into the possession of children. The selection criteria for young adult material will be the same as stated for books and other print material.

#### 3. Students.

It must be recognized that the primary obligation for providing library services in support of formal education rests with each educational institution. For this reason, the Library Service does not develop its collections in response to curriculum-based requests. Textbooks are purchased only when they provide the best coverage of a subject and are useful to the general public; they are not purchased or duplicated to satisfy the demands of a specific course of study.

#### 4. Visually handicapped

From individuals whose reading is limited by poor eyesight, the Library Service maintains a collection of large print books and recorded books on topics of general interest. The Library Service assists qualified individuals to obtain talking books and other services from the Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

### **V. Duplication**

Inherent in the selection process is the problem of predicting and evaluating demand. Within the context of the obligations of members in the shared LINK system, copies of titles in demand will be duplicated if necessary; however, the library will not duplicate heavily at the expense of a first copy of important, though less-called-for material.

### **VI. Weeding**

Weeding is necessary to maintain a vital, useful, and desirable collection.

Weeding is based on the following criteria:

1. Materials worn out through use; these may be replaced
2. Ephemeral materials which are no longer timely

3. Materials no longer considered accurate or factual
4. Materials which have had little recent use and are of questionable value
5. Excess copies of a title no longer in demand

In line with national standards, it is anticipated that a minimum of five percent of the collections will be discarded annually. Items weeded from the collection are sent to Better World Books, a not-for-profit group that distributes books through resale and donations world-wide.

### **VII. Reconsideration**

The Dane County Library Board recognizes that many materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the basis of the principles stated in this Selection Policy.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library material will be sequestered, except to protect it from injury or theft.

Patrons requesting that specific material be reevaluated may complete a "Request for Reconsideration." The request will be reviewed by the Library Director, who will take the following steps within a 4-week time frame:

1. Consult the selector;
2. Read/view/listen to the item in its entirety;
3. Look at reviews associated with the item;
4. Send a letter to the patron who has the concern explaining the decision;
5. Report any request for reconsideration and the action taken to the Library Board.

An appeal may be made to the Library Board, which will be placed on the agenda of the next regular Dane County Library Board meeting. The Board's decision regarding the disposition of the request to remove or retain the specified material will be final.

### **VIII. Attachments**

In addition to the "Request for Reconsideration" (Attachment I), two additional documents are appended and should be considered integral components of this policy. They are the "Library Bill of Rights" (Attachment II), and "Freedom to Read" (Attachment III).

Amended by substitution, September 19, 1988

Amended October 5, 2000

Reviewed and confirmed without change March 7, 2002

Amended May 5, 2005

Reviewed and confirmed without change August 2, 2007

Amended November 1, 2012

Amended September 3, 2015

Attachment I.  
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Requestor's Name:	
Address:	
City:	Zip code:
Phone:	Email:
Are you representing yourself or an organization?	
Self	Org Name

Author/artist \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Publisher, Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you learn of this work?
  
2. What are your concerns about this work?
  
3. Did you read/view/listen to the work in its entirety? If not, what parts did you read/view/listen to?
  
4. What do you believe are the main ideas or themes in the work?
  
5. What work with a similar focus would you suggest in place of this one?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Attachment II.  
THE 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.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.  
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,  
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,  
by the ALA Council.

Attachment III.  
THE FREEDOM TO READ

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.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be

directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, June 30, 2004, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

*A Joint Statement by:*

[American Library Association](#)  
[Association of American Publishers](#)

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

[American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression](#)

[The Association of American University Presses, Inc.](#)

[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)

[National Association of College Stores](#)

[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)

[National Council of Teachers of English](#)

[The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression](#)