

Category:	Procedure:	
Instructional Goals and Objectives	School Library Collection Development	
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INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of the school library is to enrich and support the educational program of the school. A comprehensive and high-quality collection of print materials, eBooks, databases, and digital products in the school library supports teaching and learning in all content areas and allows students to pursue personalized interests. These collections should meet the requirements set forth by the state of Tennessee¹ and the standards of the American Library Association and its division the American Association of School Librarians.

OVERVIEW

The development of the school’s library collection is the responsibility of the library media specialist, in cooperation with teachers, students, and administrators. Using multiple data points and a variety of stakeholder input, continuous development will result in a school library collection appropriate for the age and maturity levels of the students who may access the materials, and that is suitable for and consistent with the educational mission of the school. Collection development, a continual and integral part of school librarianship, includes the following processes:

- I. Needs Assessment
- II. Selection & Acquisition
- III. Access
- IV. Evaluation

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In order to build a collection suitable for the users at a particular library, the needs of the users must be considered and assessed. The Needs Assessment not only addresses what the users need, but by extension, it also addresses what the collection needs. Consequently, it addresses what capital is needed as well. The following steps are recommended for conducting a Needs Assessment:

1. Determine the needs of the users through student data, surveys, requests, instructional collaboration, and/or curriculum alignment, as appropriate to the school.
2. Determine the needs of the collection through circulation data, online usage data, digital collection analysis, as appropriate to the school. Identify gaps in the current collections’ offerings.
3. Create a long-range plan to address the needs of the users and the collection.

- a. Apportion the long-range plan into smaller, short-range plans that can be accomplished within the school year.
- b. Strategically allocate the budget to accommodate the short-range plans for the year.

SELECTION AND ACQUISITION

Once the users' needs have been identified and prioritized, materials should be sought to meet those needs. Long- and short-range goals should be served by selection decisions. Materials should represent a balanced treatment of subject matter. Personal biases should be monitored. The following selection criteria, as delineated in Board of Education Policy I-211², provide guidance in product decision-making:

1. Educational purpose (as defined by state standards)
2. Contribution the subject matter makes to the curriculum and to the interests of the students
3. Appropriateness to social, emotional, and intellectual level of intended audience
4. Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources
5. Favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
6. Reputation and significance of the author, producer, and publisher
7. Validity, currency, and appropriateness of the material
8. Contribution the material makes to the breadth of representative viewpoints on controversial issues
9. High degree of potential user appeal
10. High artistic quality and/or literary style
11. Quality and variety of format
12. Value commensurate with cost and/or need
13. Timeliness or permanence of the content

Materials are ordered according to the procedures of the Knox County Schools Finance Department and the Knox County Purchasing Department. Guidance for ordering procedures at each library vendor will be provided and updated by the Library Media Services Department each year.

ACCESS

The preparation of selected materials for use should work to maximize materials access to users. Physical access includes organization within the facility according to standard classification schemes, labeling, repair, regular inventory audits, and other administrative tasks associated with each material item.

Digital access for all parts of the school library collection should be provided through the school library website. Additional digital access routes may be provided through the district's learning management system or other platforms relevant for the school. Records of all non-digital items in the school library's collection will be maintained through standard library automation software and made searchable through the open public access catalog (OPAC).

These technical processes should be aligned with instructional and promotional efforts, facility scheduling, circulation routines, and other programmatic factors affecting access.

EVALUATION

Ongoing evaluation of the collection is a vital part of ensuring that users' needs are being met. The following factors are recommended for evaluating the success of the selection process:

1. Usage and circulation of new items
2. Quality and relevance of items purchased
3. Alignment of content to the school’s educational mission and the library’s programming

With any substantial addition of materials, the collection shifts and changes. This affects the overall composition of the collection and its usefulness to patrons. Regular deselection of some items in a collection helps ensure maximum collection quality and access to the remaining materials. Successful evaluation of materials selection, therefore, should also include evaluation of individual materials for possible deselection, as part of a comprehensive review process based on multiple data points including stakeholder input. The following factors are recommended for evaluating items for deselection:

1. Age and condition of items
2. Outdated information in age-sensitive nonfiction classifications
3. Appropriateness of material and illustrations
4. Bias in materials, particularly through shifting cultural norms over time

Materials in a school’s collection may be requested for reconsideration by a student, a student’s parent or guardian, or a school employee in accordance with Board of Education Policy I-212³, “Reconsideration of Instructional Materials and Textbooks.” That policy and its accompanying administrative procedure provides details on the contacts, timeline, and appeal process to follow if an item is requested for review.

Items deemed no longer beneficial to the library program through deselection or reconsideration should be removed and discarded according to procedures provided and updated annually by the Library Media Services Department.

Evaluation of the collection will inform the Needs Assessment for the next year’s collection development cycle. As necessary, the long-range plan may be adjusted to accommodate the results of the collection evaluation. Library Media Specialists will periodically receive supportive feedback from peers, building-level leadership, and Library Media Services staff to help ensure that this ongoing cycle results in collections that are appropriate for the age and maturity of the students and consistent with the educational mission of the school.

DISTRICT-WIDE COLLECTIONS

In addition to the materials collected and maintained for each school site, some materials and products will be provided at the district level for stakeholders to share. While the core of collection development should happen at the building level, in order to narrowly tailor resources to each school community’s unique needs, the efficiency and cost savings realized by district-wide resource sharing can provide a significant benefit to all students when used appropriately. Shared resources may include databases, digital resources, and/or eBooks. Districtwide resources will be selected and evaluated based on needs assessment by Library Media Services staff, school librarians, content-area specialists, and other stakeholders as needed. District-wide collections will be developed using the same major processes as school-based collections.

GIFTS

Any acceptance of gift materials should be in compliance with Board Policy D-130 “Donations, Gifts, and Bequests” and is contingent upon the previously established selection standards and the school librarian’s discretion.

1 In the event that a donor organization wants to gift a material to all school library collections districtwide,
2 the Library Media Services department staff will consult with appropriate stakeholders to assess the material,
3 then place the proposed donation in one of the following categories:
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- 5 • Accept the materials for all schools
- 6 • Accept the materials per a specific regional need
- 7 • Accept the materials generally, but allow individual schools to opt out of receiving
- 8 • Do not accept the materials generally, but allow individual schools to opt in to receive
- 9 • Do not accept the materials for any schools

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11 Communication about the donation will be made with school librarians accordingly.
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13 All gifts become the property of Knox County Schools.
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45 References:

- 46 1. "District and School Operations." TRR/MS 0520-02-.07.
- 47 2. Knox County Board of Education Policy I-211.
- 48 3. Knox County Board of Education Policy I-212.

49