

Library Materials Selection Policy

This materials selection policy is intended to implement the general objectives of the Mission Statement of the Eastern Oklahoma District Library System. A written materials selection policy aids library staff in selecting and acquiring a useful, balanced collection of books and other materials to meet the needs of the community. The System Board endorses all decisions made based upon this policy.

The purpose of this selection policy is to obtain, organize and make conveniently available to all people in the six county region recreational, educational, and informational materials in convenient form including books, periodicals, newspapers, microforms, video and audio recordings, electronic resources and other print and non-print materials. It is the policy of the Library System to maintain an up-to-date collection of standard works in all fields of knowledge, that are of permanent value, plus timely materials on current issues and items in current demand.

In addition to the requirements of the general public served, materials will be selected to meet the needs of business, the professions, government, cultural and community organizations. Materials selection will also include consideration of the needs of adult beginning readers and of people for whom English is not the principal language. Both the adult and juvenile collections will serve as supplementary sources for student use, but materials selected for students must also be useful to the general reader.

Responsibility of Selection

The selection of materials is the responsibility of the Branch Managers, with assistance from the Technical Services Coordinator. All employees may be involved in the selection process by making recommendations to the Branch Managers.

Method of Materials Selection

Materials selected must meet certain criteria, have received favorable reviews, been requested by a patron or group, and/or be of special interest.

Criteria: Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own merit and intended audience. All selections, both purchases and gifts, must meet some of the following criteria:

1. Appeal to the interests and needs of individuals in the community.
2. Permanent value as source material or interpretation.
3. Reflection of all sides of an issue.
4. Contemporary significance.
5. Artistic excellence.
6. Entertaining and effective presentation.
7. Quality including accuracy, clarity and objectivity.
8. Suitability of physical form to library use.
9. Qualifications and/or reputation of authors, artists, or publishers.
10. Relation to other materials and existing areas of coverage in order to maintain a well-balanced collection.
11. Quality of physical format.
12. Availability of information elsewhere.

Reviews: Reviews in professionally recognized periodicals are a primary source for material selection. Standard bibliographies, forthcoming selection lists, booklists by recognized authorities and the advice of competent people in specific subject areas will be used.

Requests: All requests from patrons for specific titles or subject requests will be considered. Whenever there is enough demand or interest in a title or subject, an item with unfavorable reviews may be purchased unless it is completely without literary or social value, or better materials already adequately cover the subject in question.

Special Interest: Specialized materials of limited community interest will not ordinarily be purchased. Referral to other library collections and inter-library loan will be used to supply patrons with these materials. Supplementary materials for students and information for specialists are provided in a limited number of fields. The System will avoid unnecessary duplication in subject areas that are the special prerogative of other community resources.

Weeding (removing materials from the collection)

Library staff review the collection on an ongoing basis with the goal of maintaining the quality and vitality of library resources. This process of collection management incorporates the use of output measures, circulation reports, database use statistics and other statistical information for continuous collection evaluation. Worn, damaged and dated materials are withdrawn from the collection on a regular basis. Materials may also be withdrawn if they are not used or are superseded by a new edition or a more authoritative work on the same subject.

Access

Processing and shelving of materials shall in no way reflect a value judgment of the materials. There will be no labeling of any item or its cataloging to indicate its point of view or bias. All materials will be shelved in their proper order on open shelves, freely and easily accessible to the public.

The System assures free access to its holdings for all patrons who are free to select or reject for themselves any item in the collection. Individual or group opinions about the suitability of a particular item or type of material in the collection may not preclude its use by others.

Children are not limited to the juvenile collections, although juvenile collections are usually kept together to facilitate use. Responsibility for a child's reading and viewing must rest with the parent or guardian, not with the Library System or its employees. Parents or guardians who are concerned about their child's ability to select appropriate materials may want to assist their child in his/her selection. A library employee will not take the place of a parent or guardian in "screening" materials for children.

Reconsideration of Library Materials

The Library System believes in freedom of information for all and does not practice censorship. The selection of library materials is predicated on the patron's right to read and similarly, his/her freedom from censorship by others. Selections for the branch libraries will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the material in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interest of the reader.

The Library System holds censorship to be a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject books and other materials of which he/she does not approve, he/she may not exercise censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

The Library Board considers all materials selected under this policy to be constitutionally protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. If a patron claims that a particular item is not constitutionally protected, the burden of proof rests with the patron.

All complaints will be referred to the Branch Manager who will discuss the matter with the patron and who will provide a copy of the System's Collection Development Policy to said patron. If the patron wishes, he/she will be provided with a "Request for Reconsideration" form. After receiving a completed form, the Branch Manager will examine the item in question, check reviews, and determine whether the item conforms to the standards and criteria of this selection policy. The Branch Manager will inform the Executive Director of the complaint. The Branch Manager, with help from assigned System staff, will review the material and inform the patron, in writing, of their decision. Patrons whose concerns are not satisfied may take their complaint to the next regularly scheduled System Board meeting.

Materials subject to complaint shall not be removed pending final action. The Board's decision will be final.

The Eastern Oklahoma District Library System Board of Trustees endorses the "Library Bill of Rights" and the "Freedom to Read."