

Standards

The *School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas* are adopted by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The standards and guidelines are applicable to local Texas school districts. *13 TAC 4.1*

A school district shall consider the standards in developing, implementing, or expanding library services. *Education Code 33.021*

Joint Facilities

A district may enter into contracts with a county or municipality in which the district is located to provide joint library facilities. The board and the commissioner's court of the county or governing body of the municipality must conduct public hearings before entering into such a contract. The hearings may be held jointly. *Education Code 33.022*

Definitions

Instructional materials are defined by Education Code 31.002 as content that conveys the essential knowledge and skills of a subject in the public school curriculum through a medium or a combination of media for conveying information to students. [See EFA]

For purposes of this policy, library materials, whether held in a formal school library or in a classroom, are defined as electronic, print, and nonprint resources, excluding textbooks, for independent use by students and faculty outside of the District's core educational program.

While instructional materials and library materials are both considered instructional resources, they are not the same, and the terms shall not be used interchangeably.

Objectives

Since school and classroom libraries are viewed as places for voluntary inquiry, library materials must be treated differently from instructional materials used in classroom instruction. This policy provides criteria for the selection, removal, and replacement of library materials, focused on maximizing transparency with parents and community members while meeting student needs to provide supplemental enrichment in their learning with appropriate materials. Through the provision of these library materials, the District shall recognize that parents hold an essential role in the education of their children and have the right to guide what their children read.

The District shall apply the standards, dimensions, and expectations as defined by rule 13 Administrative Code 4.1 [see EFB(LEGAL)], and any related guidance including the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's (TSLAC's) [Guidance for School Libraries on Collection Development](#),¹ as well as the [School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas](#),² to evaluate and set goals for the school library collection in alignment with Board-approved policies and procedures. Guidance from outside organizations that do not have authority over the District, such as the American Library Association and the Texas Library Association, do not supersede this policy or any controlling law, rule, or regulation.

Avoiding Inappropriate Material

In addition to the above criteria for selection, all material should be appropriate for students. Penal Code 43.24(a)(2) describes harmful material as material whose dominant theme taken as a whole:

1. Appeals to the prurient interest of a minor, in sex, nudity, or excretion;
2. Is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable for minors; and
3. Is utterly without social value for minors.

No library material shall be used, distributed, or made available to students if it contains content that can meet the harmful material standard. If in question, the District will err on the side of caution with regards to material that is potentially harmful to minors and in violation of Penal Code 43.24.

Finally, collection development policies must demonstrate a commitment to compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) as specified in 47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5), including technology protection measures. [See CQ]

Prohibited Materials

Library materials that are pervasively vulgar, obscene, or that adopt, support, or promote subject matter that has been prohibited by law or by the District's Content Guideline Exhibit, including any such instructional resources described in EMB(LOCAL), are prohibited materials.

Prohibited materials shall not be used, introduced, or provided to any students in any District school or otherwise.

For purposes of this policy, and in accordance with Penal Code 43.21, "obscene" means materials or a performance that:

1. The average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest in sex;
2. Depicts or describes:
 - a. Patently offensive representations or descriptions of ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, including sexual intercourse, sodomy, and sexual bestiality; or
 - b. Patently offensive representations or descriptions of masturbation, excretory functions, sadism, masochism, lewd exhibition of the genitals, the male or female genitals in a state of sexual stimulation or arousal, covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state or a device designed and marketed as useful primarily for stimulation of the human genital organs; and
3. Taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value.

Responsibility for Selection

The legal responsibility for the purchase of all library materials is vested in the Board. The Board or those whom it appoints will provide final approval for all new materials added to the library. Recommendations for new material and reorders of existing materials

shall be made by the District-level library supervisor or similar administrator designated by the Superintendent. This individual, with the assistance of other school personnel, shall discharge this obligation consistent with the Board's current adopted selection criteria and procedures.

Criteria for Selection

The District-level library supervisor or designated administrator shall work cooperatively with library staff, faculty, and the administration to interpret and guide the application of this policy in making selections. To ensure parental and community engagement, the District shall make the selection process of library materials readily available for parental and community review, with a list of all library materials posted online on the District's website, and the content of all materials available for direct review during reasonable hours specified for such review.

Each item selected shall:

1. Support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests and learning;
2. Meet high standards in literary, artistic, and aesthetic quality; technical aspects; and physical format;
3. Be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, intellectual development, and ability level of the students for whom the materials are selected;
4. For nonfiction resources, incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources;
5. Earn three or more favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel;
6. Balance cost with need;
7. Not be in violation of Texas Penal Code 43.24 or any other applicable law, rule, or regulation;
8. Be viewed as a whole and not be excluded because of isolated passages or illustrations, language, and the like, being taken out of context;
9. Promote literacy;
10. For nonfiction resources, incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources;
11. To the extent possible while ensuring instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), be designed to develop each student's civil knowledge, including:

- a. An understanding of:
 - (1) The fundamental moral, political, and intellectual foundations of the American experiment in self-government;
 - (2) The history, qualities, traditions, and features of civic engagement in the United States;
 - (3) The structure, function, and processes of government institutions at the federal, state, and local levels; and
 - (4) The founding documents of the United States.
 - b. The ability to:
 - (1) Analyze and determine the reliability of information sources;
 - (2) Formulate and articulate reasoned positions;
 - (3) Understand the manner in which local, state, and federal government works and operates through the use of simulations and models of governmental and democratic processes;
 - (4) Actively listen and engage in civil discourse, including discourse with those with different viewpoints; and
 - (5) Participate as a citizen in a constitutional democracy by voting.
 - c. An appreciation of:
 - (1) The importance and responsibility of participating in civic life;
 - (2) A commitment to the United States and its form of government; and
 - (3) A commitment to free speech and civil discourse.
12. When providing instruction regarding the founding documents of the United States, these shall be presented appropriately for the grade level, and in an objective, neutral, comprehensive, and unbiased manner that respects the entirety of the document. The founding documents of the United States include the Declaration of Independence; the United States Constitution; the Federalist Papers, including the Essays 10 and 51; excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in

America; the transcript of the first Lincoln-Douglas debate; the writings of the founding fathers of the United States; Frederick Douglass's speeches "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" and "What the Black Man Wants"; and Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "I Have a Dream," all taken as a whole.

In addition to the above criteria, fiction, narrative nonfiction (memoirs and biographies), and graphic novels must each meet the following selection criteria, with the District determining that such materials:

1. Are integral to the instructional program.
2. Reflect the interests and needs of the students and faculty.
3. Are appropriate for the reading levels and understanding of students.
4. Are included because of their literary or artistic value and merit.
5. If narrative nonfiction, present information with the greatest degree of accuracy and clarity.

Prior to any material being selected for inclusion, a library material shall have been reviewed and recommended for inclusion by the District-level library supervisor or individuals designated by that supervisor. If more support and/or resources are needed for this review, the District may engage a cooperative of other Texas public schools and rely upon the recommendation of that cooperative.

Acquisition Procedures

The District-level library supervisor or designated administrator shall select material based on their own expertise and solicit recommendations from others. Recommendations for library acquisitions shall involve administrators, teachers, other District personnel, parents, and community representatives, as appropriate.

Selection of materials is an ongoing process that includes the removal of collections deemed by the Board or its delegates to be no longer appropriate and the periodic replacement or repair of materials still of educational value.

School library materials orders shall be approved by the District-level library supervisor or designee, for both orders at the District and campus level.

When acquiring new library material content not previously acquired, the District-level librarian or designee shall submit a list to the Superintendent. Library material on this list will be posted for public review at least 30 days prior to Board or designee approval to purchase the library materials. The public will be given the option

to provide feedback on these proposed library materials during this 30-day period using the Content Guideline Exhibit. The feedback will include the name of the individual providing feedback as well as their affiliation with the District.

The Board or designee shall be provided the list at least 30 days prior to purchase. This 30-day period will run simultaneously with the 30-day period for public review described above. The Board or designee will also be provided all feedback provided by the public that was received during the public review time period.

Individual Board
Member Review

If any Board member questions or desires further information on any title or author, he or she shall contact the Superintendent at least 15 days before Board action. The Superintendent or designee shall then contact the District-level library supervisor to obtain copies of professional reviews of any library material in question. If so desired, the Board member can obtain a copy of the library material from another source.

Board Action

The order for library materials in its entirety, including any materials in question by individual Board members, shall be presented to the Board following the 30-day review period.

Prior to voting, individual Board members shall have an opportunity to present their rationale for desiring to exclude certain books from the order, with amendments to the proposed list considered either as a group or individually, depending on Board action. After Board approval, the final list shall be processed for order. As the new materials are received, they shall be checked against a master list of materials ordered.

The selection and acquisition of the digital library collection shall follow the same policies and procedures as the physical library collection. The District shall ensure that the method by which students access the digital library will allow students only to access age/grade-appropriate content. The curator shall apply access levels by consulting the peer-reviewed recommended age group, District librarians, and educators. Access levels shall be applied as follows:

| Recommended Ages | Grade Span | Content Access Level |
|------------------|------------|----------------------|
| 4–10 | Pre-K–5 | Juvenile |
| 11–13 | 6–8 | Middle School |
| 14+ | 9–12 | High School |
| Adult | 9–12 | High School |

TexQuest Digital
Resources

[TexQuest](#)³ is TSLAC's electronic instructional resources program for public schools. District participation in TexQuest is voluntary. TexQuest is supported by the Texas Legislature and by participation fees paid by school districts and open enrollment charter schools. TSLAC administers all aspects of the TexQuest program and coordinates with districts on the implementation and management of any TexQuest resources the District or school system selects to make available for its students.

TSLAC licenses resources for the TexQuest program following state procurement practices and with opportunities for community input. Professional librarians evaluate resources for inclusion in the program based on the TexQuest Collection Development Policy and actively manage the resulting contracts. Use of any or all TexQuest digital resources and e-books remains a Board decision.

Content Guidelines

As new library material is acquired, the District will utilize the content guidelines to guide any new acquisition. The Content Guideline exhibit will be based on the criteria found in EFB(EXHIBIT).

**Challenge
Procedures**

A parent of a District student, an employee, or any District resident may formally challenge library material used in the District's educational program on the basis of appropriateness. The school receiving a complaint about the appropriateness of a library material shall try to resolve the matter informally through a telephone conference or meeting between the complainant and the school librarian, designated campus administrator, or District-level library supervisor. The conference may also include other necessary staff members as deemed appropriate by District-level library personnel and shall be governed by the content guidelines of this policy.

Materials that are in the challenge process shall be removed from shelves and only made available in a Parental Consent Area until the challenge process is complete.

If the informal resolution process is unsuccessful in that the complainant is unsatisfied after discussion or the administration had not removed the library material and the complainant wishes to file a formal request for reconsideration, a copy of the "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form shall be provided to the complainant by the District-level library supervisor or appropriate administrator.

If a formal objection to a library material includes an allegation that the library material includes "obscene" content, the administration shall initiate an expedited review. A campus administrator and at least one District librarian shall review the specific content alleged to be "obscene" and determine if the material is "obscene." If the

content is found to be “obscene,” the library material shall be immediately removed. After removal, the administrator shall prepare a written decision explaining why the content was determined to be “obscene” and provide copies to the Superintendent, other appropriate administrators, and the complainant within five school days of the removal of the library material. If, after review, the content is found not to be “obscene,” the complainant may appeal the determination directly to the Board or request that the formal reconsideration process begin.

“Obscene” in this context is defined by Texas Penal Code 43.21.

For library material challenges that do not allege the material is “obscene,” the following shall apply:

1. All formal concerns regarding library materials shall be submitted on the form provided by the District and shall submit the completed and signed form to the District-level library supervisor or designated administrator.
2. The District-level library supervisor shall appoint a reconsideration committee within ten business days that shall review the challenged material and determine whether it conforms to the principles of selection set out in this policy.
3. The reconsideration committee shall include both District- and campus-level professional staff, including at least one member who has experience using the challenged resource with students or is familiar with the content of the challenged material, and two parents of students. The individual librarian who selected the library material should not serve on the committee. Individuals who are not parents of current students nor employees may also serve on committees. Only members of the public who have a legitimate interest in the District may serve on a committee. Members of the public who have a legitimate interest include, but are not limited to, District residents, District taxpayers, District voters, and District business owners. The Superintendent or designee shall chair the committee.
4. The total voting committee membership shall be an uneven number. The complainant will be a member of the committee if they choose to do so. If the complainant chooses not to attend the committee meeting, another committee member may be appointed. The complainant’s written submission shall be thoughtfully considered by the committee. When possible, the make-up of the committee will be a plurality of community members.

5. Prior to the committee meeting, each committee member shall read a copy of the library material in question. If a committee member does not wish to read the library material in its entirety, another individual may be appointed. If a committee member serves on the committee but has not read the entirety of the library material at issue, the member should inform the committee that they have not read the material in its entirety, which may lessen their credibility within the committee.
6. All committee members shall review the submitted written concern.
7. The committee shall review all items on the Checklist for Reconsideration of Library Materials. The committee must determine if the library material contains prohibited material harmful to minors as described in this policy. If the committee determines that harmful material is present in the library material, it should be removed from circulation.
8. After working through the content guidelines exhibit for reconsideration of library materials and any deliberations the committee feels necessary, committee members shall vote on the disposition of the library material being considered.

The major criterion for the final decision on challenged library material is the appropriateness of the resource for its intended educational use. The plurality opinion in *Board of Education v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853 (1982) [see EF(LEGAL)] uses the standard that no challenged instructional resource shall be removed solely because of the ideas expressed therein. The opinion allows the removal of materials because they are pervasively vulgar or based upon the lack of educational suitability of the library material.

Further, making a determination of appropriateness will include a review of and compliance with 47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5), Penal Code 43.24(a)(2), and Penal Code 43.24(b). When determining if library material violates the Penal Code, the committee will err on the side of caution.

Challenge committees will be audio and video recorded and open to the public. Recordings of these meetings will be considered a public record for purposes of the Public Information Act.

When the committee has reached a decision, the appropriate District-level administrator shall notify the complainant. The decision shall be in written form, dated, and provided to the complainant within ten District business days of the committee's meeting. All

other appropriate staff members shall be informed of the reconsideration and the outcome.

A specific library material that completes the formal challenge process and remains in the library shall not be reconsidered within one year of final determination unless there is a District policy or legal change that changes the determination of appropriateness of the material. Any material removed shall not be eligible for consideration to be added again for at least ten years. The District shall verify previous decisions prior to convening a reconsideration committee.

As noted above, TSLAC administers all aspects of the TexQuest program and has adopted policies for the selection and management of TexQuest resources. Challenges to material provided through the program would follow the TSLAC TexQuest content review process.

**Appeal of
Reconsideration
Committee**

The complainant may appeal the decision of the reconsideration committee by filing the appropriate District grievance form [see DGBA, FNG, or GF].

**Opportunity for
Community Review**

In recognizing that parents hold an essential role in the education of their children and have the right to guide what their children read, each library shall maintain a printed list of materials onsite and on the school library website that shows what has been selected as well as what is slated for acquisition. The Superintendent, or designated District-level administrator, shall offer a “Community Preview” at least 30 days before books are to be placed on the shelves and at least once in the fall and once in the spring. Audio-visual materials are to be made available to parents for in-person review, upon request, on the same basis as printed materials are made available.

**Other Parental
Considerations**

In school libraries, students are afforded the opportunity to self-select texts as part of literacy development. While librarians are trained in selecting materials in accordance with Board policy and the outlined selection criteria and may provide guidance to students in selecting texts, the ultimate determination of appropriateness lies with the student and parent.

School librarians or designated campus administrators are to encourage parents to share any considerations regarding their students’ book selections. Parents may contact the campus librarian directly and/or complete an online form for library book opt-out decisions. School librarians shall accommodate individual requests by parents, within reason, which may include restricting specific titles or books, genres, subject matter, authors, or other restrictions as requested by parents.

Criteria for Gifts and Donations

Gifts and donations to the school library or classroom libraries are accepted with the understanding that the decision for use and disposition of the materials and/or funds will be determined using the same selection criteria as purchased materials as set out above. All materials should support the curriculum and needs of library users. Gifts and donations, like purchased resources, shall be removed from the collection at the end of their useful life. Gifts and donations shall be subject to the acquisition policy and process for approval before being included in the school library collection or in a classroom library. Gifts and donations shall also be subject to the reconsideration procedure as set out in this policy. [See CDC]

Book Fairs

Campuses will on occasion host book fairs. All materials at the book fair should meet all requirements and standards as outlined in this policy. If library material is donated to the campus through the book fair, the library material will be treated as a gift, and all requirements of this policy regarding acquisition, review, and removal shall be followed.

Routine Review and Removal of Materials

Biannually, the District-level library supervisor shall collaborate with campus library personnel and administration to conduct an inventory of the school library collection and equipment. The inventory can be used to determine losses and remove damaged or worn materials that can then be considered for replacement. The inventory can also be used to deselect and remove materials that are no longer relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students. Additionally, the District-level library supervisor shall develop a collection maintenance plan that includes systematic inspection of materials that would result in removing outdated, damaged, or irrelevant materials from the collection. All materials removed from the collection shall be disposed of in accordance with the District's property disposal procedures. [See CI] Incorporated into this routine review and removal of existing inventory, the District shall create an ongoing cycle to review content existing in circulation.

Due to their professional credentials, librarians can deselect materials found to be inappropriate due to any of the reconsideration guidelines without the formal reconsideration process. This can be executed at any appropriate time. The District encourages the librarians to deselect a material if found to be inappropriate to the outlined guidelines if a librarian is aware prior to a formal challenge.

¹ TSLAC's Guidance for School Libraries on Collection Development: https://www.tsl.texas.gov/sites/default/files/public/tslac/agency/exec/TSLAC_Guidelines_for_SL_Collection_Development_2022.pdf

² School Library Programs: Standards and Guidelines for Texas:

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ldn/schoollibrarystandards>

³ TexQuest: <https://texquest.net/welcome/program>

Content Guidelines

| Theme | Elementary | Intermediate | Middle | High* |
|---|------------|--------------|--------|-------|
| Profanity | N | M | S | C |
| Kissing | N | S | S | C |
| Horror | N | M | S | C |
| Violence | M | S | S | C |
| Bullying | M | S | S | C |
| Drug or alcohol use by minors | N | N | S | C |
| Tobacco use by minors | N | S | S | C |
| Drug or alcohol use by adults | M | S | S | C |
| Glorification of suicide, self-harm, or mental illness | N | N | S | S |
| Brief description of nonsexual nudity | N | M | S | C |
| Sexually explicit conduct or descriptions of sexual abuse | N | N | N | N |
| Illustrations or description of nude intimate body parts | N | N | N | N |
| Passionate and/or extended kissing | N | N | M | P |
| Sex scenes or sexual activities | N | N | N | M |

N = None

M = Minimal (infrequent) - the content rarely appears throughout the volume

S = Some - the content occasionally appears throughout the volume

C = Common - the content appears throughout the volume but is not a main theme of the volume

P = Prevalent - the content is frequent enough to be a main theme of the volume

Parents of students always have the authority to limit their own student's access to any and all materials in a library

*Books recommended by the College Board, universities, or the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) are separate and apart from general library materials available to all students and are selected independently.

Terms and Definitions

For purposes of this Content Guideline System, the following terms and definitions will be used to interpret the content guidelines:

Profanity - Profane/obscene language that cannot be said on broadcast television or that would not be age-appropriate in a professional setting or for an educator to use in front of a classroom.

Intimate parts - The prurient description of naked genitals, pubic area, anus, buttocks, or female nipple of a person. Any material that is part of the approved curriculum is excluded from this definition.

Sexually explicit conduct – Descriptions of sexual activity, including sexual intercourse, genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal, whether between persons of the same or opposite sex; bestiality; masturbation; sadistic or masochistic abuse; or lascivious exhibition of the anus, genitals, or pubic area of any person.

Violence - Behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, abuse, damage, or kill someone or something to include glorification of use of weapons.

Horror – Descriptions of behavior arousing feelings of extreme fear, shock, or disgust.

Sexual abuse – Descriptions of rape, incest, molestation, and/or any sexual abuse of a minor or adult.

Kissing - platonic or familial kissing that does not include romantic or sexual kissing or oral physical contact that is intended to satisfy the romantic or sexual desire of any reasonable person based on prevailing community values.

Bullying – descriptions of behavior that seeks to harm, intimidate, or coerce another, especially someone perceived as vulnerable.

Nonsexual nudity – description or depiction of the human body for anatomical, scientific, or biological purposes to satisfy an educational need. This term specifically excludes any description or depiction of the human body intended to satisfy sexual desire of any reasonable person based on prevailing community values.