

## **Material Selection Policy**

### 1. Intellectual Framework (Philosophy)

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are rights of our heritage, guaranteed to each of us by the Constitution and defended by our courts. Since the public library serves and is supported by many and varied groups of people and individuals to satisfy the interest and beliefs of one group, sacrifice the interests of others.

Public opinion tends to change with time and circumstances and librarians do not claim to be exempt from transitory currents of feeling. Therefore, they believe that majority public opinion, even when shared by themselves is not a reliable guide for materials selection in a library with a responsibility to the future as well as the present. History shows that many books which have been most controversial or objectionable to some persons or groups have later been recognized as books which most, rather than least, belong in public libraries. If an idea is truly dangerous or evil, the best protection against it is a public which has been exposed to it, understands it, and has rejected it.

### 2. Objective

The mission of the Romeo District Library is to provide modern library resources and services necessary to meet the evolving educational, recreational and informational needs of the public, thus enhancing individual and community life.

To support this mission, the library materials are selected, organized and made accessible in order to anticipate and meet the diverse needs of this community.

In this effort, we provide materials old and new, classic and ephemeral, orthodox and unorthodox in many media, including several forms of print, video and recordings. As another medium of communication, we may provide live programs; these may include lectures, demonstrations, concerts, dramatic presentations, poetry readings, workshops and discussion groups.

Though the Library attempts to give the best service possible to its regular users, it also has an obligation to satisfy the needs of those in the community who have not traditionally been library users. The library must consider not only the present needs of the community, but must attempt to anticipate the future needs in order to give timely service.

Materials should be selected and services and programs planned that satisfy residents' needs as individuals and as members of groups with concern given for all ages, backgrounds, interests, abilities and levels of education. Staff, materials and service should be in ample supply to allow the Library to be a dependable resource for most people most of the time.

The Library strives to stimulate not only learning but also concern and understanding. It attempts to provide materials and guidance in their use so that as many people as possible can utilize the collective knowledge of mankind. It is vitally important that every citizen today has ready and free access to the world of ideas, information and creative experience.

We continually try to find ways to expand our services to more people so that we can serve every possible kind of library user.

### 3. Goals of Selection

The Romeo District Library strives for systematic selection so that the resulting collection will be balanced thereby serving the needs of the total community. The library selects, makes available and promotes, the use of library materials, whatever the format, which:

1. Meet the informational needs of the community.
2. Meet the recreational needs of the community.
3. Supplement formal and informal study.
4. Reflect a variety of opinions (minority and majority) on a subject.
5. Support business, cultural, recreational and civic activities in the community.
6. Stimulate self-understanding and growth.
7. Enhance job-related knowledge and skills.
8. Increase knowledge of and participation in the affairs of the community, the country and the world.

### 4. Authority and Responsibility for Collection Development

Final authority for the determination of the policies in this document is vested in the Library's Board of Trustees.

The authority and responsibilities for the selection of library materials is delegated to the Library Director and under his/her direction, to the professional staff that are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training and experience.

### 5. Criteria for Selection

The evaluation of materials is characterized by flexibility, open-mindedness and

responsiveness to the changing needs of the citizens of the community.

To build collections of merit and significance, materials must be measured by objective guidelines. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following standards. Clearly, however, an item need not meet all the criteria in order to be acceptable. When judging the quality of materials, several standards and combinations of standards may be used, as some materials may be judged primarily on artistic merit, while others are considered because of scholarship, value as human documents, or ability to satisfy the recreational and entertainment needs of the community and in other instances the criterion may be substantial demand.

Materials are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular passage or passages. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because of frankness of expression.

## 6. General Criteria

1. Availability and suitability of physical form for use.
2. Suitability of subject, style and reading level for the intended audience.
3. Reputation and/or significance of author.
4. Reputation of the publisher or producer.
5. Quality of design and illustrations.
6. Present and potential relevance to community needs.
7. Demand for materials.
8. Relationship to existing materials in the collection on the same subject.
9. Availability and accessibility of the same material in the area.
10. Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content.
11. Importance as a document of the times.
12. Insight into human and social conditions.
13. Attention given

## 7. Authority and Responsibility for the Maintenance of Library Collections

### A. Withdrawal of materials

Materials are regularly discarded from library collections. They are withdrawn because they are out-of-date, so badly worn or damaged that they cannot be bound or mended, because it is cheaper to replace them or because they are once-popular materials that are no longer used. Space, the cost of replacement and the appearance of the collection are factors in these decisions.

It is a function of librarians to select and to discard library materials and to advise on their use. They are fitted for this task through training and experience. In the Romeo District Library a careful study is made of each book before it is discarded,

taking into account many different factors; obsolescence, physical condition of the book, number of copies in the library, research value, adequate coverage in the field and the availability of similar material. Withdrawn materials may later be sold.

#### B. Gifts

Gifts of books and other materials are accepted with the understanding that they may be used or disposed of as the Library sees fit. Books and other materials that are purchased as memorials may also be withdrawn. Library staff will make reasonable efforts to reach donors and to offer the materials to them; however, if the donor does not respond or chooses not to accept the materials, they will be discarded in the same manner as all other materials.

#### C. Replacement

A replacement is an item purchased to take the place of an identical title previously in the collection. It is the library's policy not to replace automatically all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage or wear. Need for replacement in each case is judged by two factors:

1. Existence of adequate coverage of the subject, especially if more current material is available.
2. Demand for the specific title.

### 8. Controversial Material

Materials representing various points of view are acquired. Works normally are not excluded because of language or explicit text or illustrations, if they meet previously stated criteria.

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for himself/herself, he/she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

#### 1. Complaints about Library Materials

Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some complaints, the following procedures have been developed assure that complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner.

##### A. Policy Statement

The Romeo District Library Board recognizes the right of individuals to question materials in the library collection. The Board of Trustees further recognizes that

democracy functions only if the full range of human ideas is accessible to the people and if proponents of various points of view are able to fully and openly make their cases, however popular or unpopular they may be. The principle is guaranteed in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States which protects the free expression of ideas. It is exemplified by public libraries which provide access to those ideas in accordance with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. Thus, the library collection, protected by the First Amendment, is a marketplace of ideas which are contained in varied and divergent materials.

## B. Regulations

1. The customer's choice of library materials for personal use is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for himself or herself and for his or her children or wards, s/he cannot exercise censorship to restrict materials access to any others. Responsibility for the use of materials by children and adolescents rests with their parents or legal guardians.
2. A resident of the Romeo District Library service area who objects to an item already in the collection or made electronically accessible by the Library should discuss the reasons with a librarian, who will provide an explanation of the Library's criteria for selection, acquisition or access.
3. If a resident's concern remains unresolved, s/he may address an objection to the presence or absence of a work by completing the *Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form.
4. The professional staff and the library trustees will review the customer's *Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials*. The customer will be informed of the trustees' decision regarding the request for reconsideration. The decision of the library board is final.
5. Items previously reviewed and retained by the Library Board shall not be reconsidered for removal.
6. The library collection will be organized and maintained to facilitate access. Any labeling, sequestering or alteration of materials because of controversy surrounding the materials will not be sanctioned.