

Material Selection Policy

1 Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to serve as a guide to the librarians of the Romeo District Library (RDL) in the process of materials selection and to inform the public of the principles upon which RDL selections and deselections are made. Basic to this Policy is the American Library Association's Library Bills of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement as affirmed by the RDL Board of Trustees

2. Objectives

The main objective 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 enriching individual and community life.

RDL strives to achieve the following goals with its materials collections:

1. Provide materials that are of interest and relevance to the members of its community.
2. Balance collections to incorporate both popular materials and those of lasting value.
3. Offer materials in a variety of formats to meet the needs of the community.
4. Represent a broad spectrum of interests to appeal to individuals of all ages and backgrounds.
5. Give all relevant perspectives on topics of interest to its community and support intellectual freedom.
6. Consider the value of each item, the needs of the community, the existing collection, future trends, and RDL's budget when adding materials to the collection.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 the 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

6. 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. They are fit for this task through education, 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.

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. *See Gifts and Donations Policy for more information.*

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.

7. Controversial Material

Materials representing various points of view are acquired.

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for oneself or for one's child(ren), one cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

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 a formal objection to the presence or absence of a work by completing the *Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form.
4. The Library Director will review the customer's *Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials*. The customer will be informed of the Director's decision regarding the request for reconsideration. An appeal can be made to the Library Board of Trustees. However, the decision of the Library Board is final.
5. Items previously reviewed and retained by the Director and/or 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.