



Collection Development Policies: A Checklist for Districts

Each Texas public school district board or governing body must approve and institute a collection development policy that describes the processes and standards by which a school library acquires, maintains, and withdraws materials as outlined in the [*collection development standards for school libraries \(13 Texas Administrative Code §4.2\)*](#).

This checklist outlines the minimum required elements of a school library collection development policy. A district's policy must address each of the points listed. School districts may add procedures to these minimum requirements to satisfy local needs so long as the added procedures do not conflict with the minimum requirements specified in the mandatory standards.

This checklist is provided as an optional resource to assist districts in developing or revising their collection development policies. We strongly recommend that district and library staff work in concert with their district legal counsel to ensure all legal requirements and local interests are addressed. This checklist is not intended to be a substitute for review and application of the collection development standards. School districts are responsible for ensuring their school libraries implement and adhere to 13 TAC §4.2.

General Requirements

- Is your collection development policy approved by your governing board?
- Does your school library collection development policy:
 - Describe its purpose and collection development goals?
 - Designate who is responsible for collection development?
 - Establish procedures for all facets of collection development, including the following?
 - Evaluation of materials (see *Evaluation of Materials* below)
 - Selection of materials
 - Acquisition of materials
 - Reconsideration of materials (see *Reconsideration Requirements* below)
 - Deselection of materials
 - Consider the distinct age groups, grade levels, and possible access to materials by all students within a campus?
 - Include a process to determine and administer student access to materials rated “sexually relevant” by library material vendors, consistent with any policies adopted by the Texas Education Agency and local school board requirements? [Note: as of date of publication of this checklist, this provision is inoperative. See FAQ for additional information.]
 - Include an access plan that allows efficient parental access to the district’s library and online catalog?
 - Include collection assessment and evaluation procedures to periodically appraise the quality of library materials to ensure the library’s goals, objectives, and information needs are serving its school community?
 - Stipulate a means to weed or update the collection?

A collection development policy must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Specifically, as required by Education Code, §33.021, a collection development policy must:

- Recognize that parents are the primary decision makers regarding their student’s access to library material
- Prohibit the possession, acquisition, and purchase of harmful material, library material rated sexually explicit material by the selling library material vendor*, or library material that is pervasively vulgar or educationally unsuitable *[Note: as of date of publication of this checklist, highlighted clause only is inoperative. See FAQ for additional information]

- Recognize that obscene content is not protected by the First Amendment
- Be required for all library materials available for use or display, including those in school libraries, classroom libraries, and online catalogs
- Ensure schools provide library catalog transparency, including:
 - Online catalogs that are publicly available
 - Information about titles and how and where materials can be accessed
- Recommend schools communicate effectively with parents regarding collection development, including:
 - Access to district/campus policies relating to school libraries
 - Consistent access to library resources
 - Opportunities for students, parents, educators, and community members to provide feedback on library materials and services
- Prohibit the removal of material based solely on the ideas contained in the material or the personal background of the author of the material or characters in the material

Evaluation of Materials

Does your school library collection:

- Enrich and support the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and curriculum established by Education Code, §28.002 (relating to Required Curriculum), while taking into consideration students' varied interests, maturity levels, abilities, and learning styles?
- Foster growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and societal standards?
- Encourage the enjoyment of reading, foster high-level thinking skills, support personal learning, and encourage discussion based on rational analysis?
- Represent the ethnic, religious, and cultural groups of the state and their contribution to Texas, the nation, and the world?
- Does your process for evaluating materials specify the consideration of local priorities and school district standards?
- Does your process require use of at least two of the following methods of evaluation?
 - Consideration of recommendations from parents, guardians, and local community members

- Consultation with the school district’s educators and library staff and/or consultation with library staff of similarly situated school districts and their collections and collection development policies
- An extensive review of the text of an item
- Consideration of the context of a work, including consideration of the contextual characteristics, overall fit within existing school library collection, and potential support of the school curriculum
- Consideration of authoritative reviews of the items from sources such as professional journals in library science, recognized professional education or content journals with book reviews, national and state award recognition lists, library science field experts, and highly acclaimed author and literacy expert recommendations

Reconsideration Requirements

As outlined in the collection development standards, a reconsideration process should ensure that any parent or legal guardian of a student currently enrolled in the school district or employee of the school district may request the reconsideration of a specific item in their school district’s library catalog.

Consider the following questions when developing or revising a reconsideration process. Does your process:

- Establish a uniform procedure an individual must follow when filing a request?
- Include an online reconsideration request form on the district’s website (or ensure the form is publicly available at the district administrative office)?
- Include the distribution of a completed reconsideration request form to the superintendent (or designee), school librarian, and school district board of trustees (or governing body) once submitted?
- Outline how the district will convene a review committee to ensure a thorough and fair process?
- Include a reasonable timeframe (approved by the school board) for the review and final decision regarding a reconsideration request? This should take into account:
 - The time necessary to convene a committee to meet and review the item
 - Flexibility that may be necessary depending on the number of pending reconsideration requests
 - Other factors relevant to a fair and consistent process, including timely progress updates to the requestor

- Establish a uniform process for the treatment of library materials undergoing reconsideration?
- Include a review and appeal process approved by the school district board or governing body?
- Determine a standard timeframe for reconsideration of items that have gone through the reconsideration process? (Administrators should note that the rule states that if an item has gone through the reconsideration process and remains in the collection, the district may not be required to reconsider the item within two calendar years.)

Other Provisions

Does your policy:

- Ensure that a certified school librarian or professional library staff trained on proper collection development standards is responsible for the selection and acquisition of library materials?
- Ensure a regular review of the collection development policy at least every three years?