

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

(March, 2003)

A. Purpose of policy

The Board of Trustees of the North Madison County Public Library System sets forth policies for the overall operation and service of the Library. Recognizing the pluralistic nature of the local community, the Board provides this Selection Policy to guide the librarians in their selection responsibilities, and to inform the public of the principles upon which selection of library materials is made.

B. Responsibility for Selection

Within the frame work of the materials selection policy, the Board of Trustees delegates to the Director the ultimate responsibility of selecting library materials. The Director may in turn delegate selection responsibility to the academically prepared and professionally trained staff. The general public and staff members may also recommend materials for consideration.

C. Principles of Selection

1. Books and other materials selected shall be chosen for values of interest, information and recreation to the people of the community.
2. The Library shall be selective because of the volume published in many fields and aim for areas which reflect community needs and demands and are consonant with its objectives as a public library. It acquires materials which:
 - a. interpret, document and illuminate the past
 - b. represent various contemporary points of view reflecting current conditions, trends and controversies, international, national and local
 - c. foster a knowledge of self and an understanding of others.
 - d. Provide aesthetic appreciation and stimulate the imagination
 - e. Advance the individual's capacity for understanding the world in which he lives
 - f. Contribute to the enjoyment of life
 - g. Supplement the reference, research and recreational needs of borrowers of all ages
3. Some criteria of particular importance in selecting materials are:
 - a. authority
 - b. the authors literary standing
 - c. documentation used
 - d. accuracy
 - e. subject content
 - f. comparative scarcity of published material
 - g. social relevance of the theme
 - h. readability
 - i. literary merit

- j. effectiveness of presentation
 - k. current demand
 - l. importance of subject matter to the collection
 - m. possible future research value
 - n. local interest in the author or subject
 - o. physical format, limitation of use
 - p. specialized format (handicapped, e.g.)
 - q. cost
 - r. availability in other libraries
 - s. inclusion of title in bibliographies and reviews.
4. Judgment for selection made on the material as a whole, and not on some passage, page, scene or other part alone.
 5. In fields which the local library cannot develop extensively, the aim is to acquire basic materials by which readers may gain basic information and prepare for use of the larger or specialized collections of other libraries.
 6. A new acquisition shall be measure against other materials available to determine which selection seems wisest in view of the Library's needs, space and available funds. Consideration is given to materials which may be of interest to a few patrons as well as those of interest to many.
 7. The Library does not attempt to acquire textbooks and other curriculum related materials or professionally and technically oriented resources except as such materials also serve the general public.
 8. The Library acknowledges a particular interest in local and state history and the works of local authors. The library will however, apply the same standards of selection to the works of the local authors as it does to other library materials.
 9. Through its Branch Libraries the North Madison County Public Library System makes library materials accessible to people in all sections of the library's service area. These collections cannot duplicate the Main Elwood Library's collections completely. Within the budget and space, these ancillary collections provide for local interests and needs by a balance in the selection of educational, recreational, vocational, and home interest materials.
 10. The North Madison County Public Library system recognizes its responsibility to young adults. The use of books is seen as an assist in their development toward adulthood, by awakening new reading interests, by furthering a taste for good literature, by providing an opportunity to explore new ideas, by contributing to their personal and intellectual growth.
 11. Selection of juvenile materials is based on the criteria listed in section 3. Diversified backgrounds, tastes, interest and abilities are acknowledged. The use of such material by children is the responsibility of their parents or legal guardians.
 - The Library's objectives in serving children are to:
 - a. help children widen their interest and extend their horizons
 - b. stimulate and help satisfy their curiosity

- c. aid them in increasing their knowledge and understanding of their immediate and larger world with its varied peoples and cultures
 - d. help each child realize his own identity as a person of worth
 - e. help children discover reading is fun.
12. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Director the ultimate responsibility of withdrawing materials. Regularly the Library re-evaluates its collection and withdraws materials because they are out-dated, badly worn, rarely used by the public or inconsistent with selection criteria. Withdrawn materials may be made available for public sale.
 13. The library welcomes gifts, but accepts them with the understanding that it has the right to handle or dispose of them in the best interest of the institution. Such material may be added to the collection provided that it meets the Library's standard of section.
 14. The Library's Board of Trustees believes that anyone is free to reject for him/herself library materials of which he/she does not approve; however, he/she does not have the right to restrict the freedom of others to use these materials. No book or other library materials shall be excluded because of the race, sex, nationality or the political, religious or social views of the author.
 15. The Library administration provides procedures for public comment on library materials. (see attached PATRON'S COMMENT ON LIBRARY MATERIALS).

BOOK COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

1. Patron complains about a book (or other materials).
2. Employee explains that books are selected according to criteria specified in the Book Selection Policy.
3. If patron persists, employee should at this point refer the matter to the Department head.
4. The Department head should explain to patron that it is our policy to allow individuals to accept or reject materials for themselves but not to impose their judgment upon others.
If the objection is that children will have access to inappropriate material, explain that the responsibility for screening what children read is the parents', not the library's.
5. If patron still persists, offer him a copy of our Materials Selection Policy and a patron's Comment form and explain that this needs to be completed in order to proceed further with the matter. Explain that this aids the librarian in understanding the specifics of the complaint and in reviewing the material in question.
6. The Department Head will, upon receiving a comment form, decide whether or not to proceed further with the complaint. For example, if the form is only partially completed, or hastily done, etc., the Department Head may simply file it away until and unless the patron complains further. If it is a thoughtful, complete

comment, the Department Head should review the work in question to be sure it does comply with our selection criteria.

7. The Department Head will advise the Director of the action taken, whether filed away or followed up.
8. If the patron follows up on the action taken and disagrees with it, he should then be referred to the Director.

MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY
Comment form Adopted 10/91

PATRON'S COMMENT ON LIBRARY MATERIALS

Type of material (book, periodical, other) _____

Author _____

Title _____

Publisher and date of publication _____

Patron Name _____

Patron Address _____

Do you represent:

_____ An Organization? (Name) _____

_____ Other group? (Name) _____

Have you read the entire work? _____ If not, which parts? _____

What do you see as its theme or purpose?

What do you find of value in the work?

What do you find objectionable about the work? (Please cite specific pages)

What do you think might result from reading this material?

Are there other titles on this subject that you would suggest for the library? If so,
Please list title and author.

Comments:

Signature

Date

NORTH MADISON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM