

ASSIGNMENT #2
COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT
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The Newton Falls Exempted Village School District Libraries

1) The collection development policy of this school district does not outwardly define the scope or intensity of its collection. Instead, it states that "it is the responsibility of the library to provide a collection of materials representative of all fields of interest, and geared to the many needs of the students and faculty." Furthermore, media is selected with two criteria in mind; "1) to enrich the curriculum and 2) to further the development of youth, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and culturally." Elsewhere in the policy, one finds that librarians in this school district follow a set of guidelines called 'selection criteria by subject' and 'selection criteria by medium,' which are no more than guidelines on how to evaluate materials when selecting them. No indication is given as to the scope or intensity of any specific subject area, although guidelines for selecting materials in the areas of literature, social studies, science, and mathematics are emphasized. Perhaps choosing materials based on their intensity and scope is much more difficult in school libraries than it is in college or academic libraries, I guess primarily because there are so many different subject areas and different levels of learning involved in the selection process. In any case, the collection development policy of this particular school district does not spell out specifically either the parameters of the collection or the intensity of subject area coverage.

2) In this particular collection development policy, it states that "the school district strives to prepare the whole child for his/her role as a contributing member to our society and that the freedoms to read and to develop an awareness of humanity's diverse heritage are essential rights in a democracy." Elsewhere, the policy provides guide-

lines for reviewing questioned materials. It gives specifics as to the process that is to^{be} followed when parents or other members of the community challenge materials. Aside from these statements, the policy does not further clarify the issue of intellectual freedom. I find this to be problematic for several reasons. First of all, the freedom to read becomes a very touchy issue when dealing with children and their right to access to so called 'questionable' materials. The policy gives no clues as to what the school district would do if someone wanted to censor all the materials on a given topic such as sexuality. Neither does it clarify the parents role in regards to access to materials. Although the guidelines that are provided for reviewing questionable materials do cover some of this, I find these rather inadequate, primarily because they don't really give any detail concerning the freedom to read, nor are the students themselves in any way involved in the reviewing process.

3) This collection development policy is a very general one. Emphasis is placed on what to take into account when searching for and acquiring print and non-print materials. Ultimately, these guidelines are of use only to the librarians and media specialists involved. There are several elements that I feel should have been included in the policy. First of all, the community of users was not very clearly defined. One not familiar with the school district, upon reviewing this collection development policy, does not know whether the district encompasses grade schools, junior high schools or high schools. Furthermore, the policy never states if or how materials are to be shared across the ditrict. Primary responsibility for the collection, it says, lies with the media specialist staff, but one doesn't* know whether that person or persons acquire materials for the entire district or if each school has its own selector. It seems

to me that by leaving out such information, the writers of this collection development policy have done a rather mediocre job.

The Carnegie Library of Pittsburg Collection Development Policy

1) The collection development policy of this library system has various strengths and weaknesses. As a public library system, it does a somewhat adequate job in defining its community of users and its target community. However, it only specifically mentions the business, research and cultural communities in any depth, stressing that these components are among the largest in the country. Sadly, nothing is said about the various ethnic groups living there. The purpose of the library, as stated in the policy, says that "it strives to provide the best library materials available for children, teenagers, and adults in order to contribute to the growth and development of all the citizens it serves." Emphasis in the policy is placed on criteria for selecting materials, which include books, pamphlets, ephemeral materials, microform and audio-visual materials. In depth collection is stressed in terms of providing reference materials for the already mentioned large research community in Pittsburg. However, beyond that there are no specifics mentioned regarding the depth or breadth of the collection. Much emphasis is placed on the criteria involved in selecting materials for the juvenile collection. I find that the policy is strongest in this area. The policy is weakest, however, in defining its community and all the ^{sub-components} of it. No mention is made of the different branch libraries or how resources are shared and acquired.

2) In terms of intellectual freedom, virtually nothing is said, and in this, the policy is sorely lacking. Neither is anything mentioned about censorship or the reviewing of questioned materials. It seems incredible

that such a large community as Pittsburg can afford to dismiss the whole issue as it does by not stating anything about it in the policy.

3) In terms of its overall usefulness, the collection development policy of this library system is very short-^{LIGHTER}sided. It lacks depth. Nothing is mentioned about intellectual freedom; nothing is mentioned concerning the depth or breadth of any subject areas; no provisions are made for reviewing materials; neither is anything mentioned about the library system and its respective branches. Finally, nothing is stated about reviewing the policy itself. It seems to me that such a large library as the Carnegie Library of Pittsburg, with a budget of over nine million dollars could have put a little more effort into formulating such a crucial document.

The San Diego University Library Collection Development Policy

1) The collection development policy of this institution seems to be the most well developed of the three that I have examined. Most of the criteria offered in Evans and the ALA Guidelines were covered in this document. However, the policy did not define the scope or intensity of the collection very well. Missing in the policy were the code levels used in determining the depth of the subject areas covered. All that was mentioned was that the library sought to provide materials of relevance to the curriculum and research needs of the University community. No mention was made of the main areas of study in the University. However, in terms of offering guidelines for selecting different forms of materials, the policy is adequate. For example, much space is given to the process of collecting such things as gifts, government publications, maps, duplicate copies of materials, etcetera.

2) The collection development policy of this University states that "the University library subscribes to the tenets of the American Li-

brary Association's statements in its Bill of Rights on intellectual freedom, supporting the right to free and unrestricted access to information." Then the policy refers the reader to its appendix where the statements are located. Beyond that, the policy says no more. There is no suggested process given for the review or removal of objectionable materials. I guess because it follows the ALA guidelines that the writers find no further need to elaborate on the censorship issue. I find this to be rather unfortunate, because it seems that it would be in its own interest and for its own protection that any library should and would develop some guidelines on dealing with attempts by people in the community to challenge the content of a library's collection. Since censorship attempts are on the rise, it would seem wise that a revision of this policy be done to include information on how to deal with challenges given by community members.

3) I think that the collection development policy of this institution is useful up to a point. It does an adequate job of defining the criteria upon which to choose materials and which materials are to be selected. However, the policy gives no in-depth guidelines concerning either depth or breadth of coverage. The librarians in this library, therefore must take it upon themselves to know the research and curriculum needs of the University. This seems like a much more difficult process to undergo, especially for new librarians, than if the levels of selection in the different subject areas were given right in the policy itself.

Overall, it seems that librarians in the above institutions don't really take very seriously the need for a comprehensive and complete collection development policy. As Evans has stated, it takes lots of time to develop a well-rounded and complete statement. Apparently, this

is what induces librarians to write such short-^{SIAHTE D}~~sided~~ collection development policies. It seems to me that with decreasing funds and increased challenges for accountability, that it is of the utmost importance that librarians begin to re-evaluate their policies. This would be for their own benefit as well as that of the communities which they serve.