Intellectual Freedom Book Challenges

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Outline

- Challenged vs. Banned
- Collection Development Policy
- Collection Development Policy Procedure
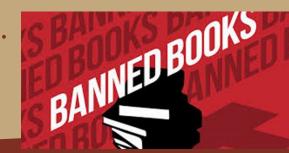- Support
- Resources

Challenged *vs.* Banned

- ***Intellectual Freedom:*** is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction.

- ***Challenge:*** is an attempt to remove or restrict materials, based on the objections of a person or group.

- ***Banned***: is the removal of those materials.

BANNED BOOKS

Censorship by the Numbers

Books are being challenged throughout New Jersey and around the country of which 48% is targeted at public libraries.

2022 US Challenges by the numbers:

- **1,269** reported attempts to ban or restrict library resources.

- **2,571** unique titles were targeted. 38% increase from 2021

Essential Library Policies

- Collection Development and Resource Reconsideration.
- Internet Use.
- Use of Meeting Room and Exhibit Spaces.
- Privacy and Confidentiality.
- Social Media
- User Behavior and Library Use

Collection Development

- Library collection development is the process of systematically building the collection of a particular library to meet the information needs of the library users in a timely and economical manner.

Collection Development Policy

Why do you need a collection development policy?

- Protects against challenges.
- Ensures materials reflect the library's mission and guiding principles.
- Provides a framework for consist selection in all formats.
- States who is responsible for selection.
- Ensures a diversity of viewpoints.

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- Provides standard for collection maintenance and removal of material.
- Guideline for gifts and donations.
- Process for patrons to share concerns about library resources.
- Affirms the importance of intellectual freedom; First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement.

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Components of a Good Policy

- Library Mission
- Support of Intellectual Freedom
- Collection Responsibility
  - *Reconsideration of library material*
- Selection Criteria
- Acquisitions
- Special collections
- Gifts and Donations
- Collection Maintenance and Weeding

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Challenged Materials Procedure

Why do you need a procedure?

- Establishes a plan of action.
- Ensures consistency.
- Assigns responsibility.

Components of a Good Procedure

- Establish a review committee / team leader.
- Evaluation form.
- Provides a timeframe.
- Decides how/who will notify patron.

Staff Book Review Form

Professional Book Review

1. Write the title, author, and publisher:

2. Which GCLS and LOGIN libraries carry it? How many checkouts does it have?

3. Who is the intended audience?

4. Is this subject relevant? If so, how?

5. Is the material current?   **Yes**   **No**   Write the publication date:

6. What is the author's expertise in the subject?

7. What is the author's purpose?

8. Does this book have positive reviews from professional sources (Kirkus Reviews, SLJ, etc.)?
Yes   No

9. Is the information objective? Clear?

10. If applicable, does this subject matter supplement the curriculum of community schools?

11. Please provide your professional unbiased comments/concerns/suggestions.

Name:_____   Date:_____

Tips and Tools for Frontline Staff

- Educate
- Prepare
- Support

Educate

Lunchtime Talk

Webinars

LibraryLinkNJ

Prepare

Request for Reconsideration Form Sample

- Readily available to front-line staff.
- Know where the policy is on the website

Sample Public Library Request for Reconsideration of Material Form

The trustees of Mainstream Public Library have established a materials selection policy and a procedure for gathering input about particular items. Completion of this form is the first step in that procedure. If you wish to request reconsideration of a resource, please return the completed form to the library director.

Mainstream Library. 1 Mainstream Plaza. Anytown, State Zip

Date	
Name	
Address	
City	State/Zip
Phone	Email

Do you represent self? _____ Or an organization? _____ Name of Organization _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

___ Book (e-book)   ___ Magazine   ___ Digital Resource   ___ Newspaper
___ Movie   ___ Audio Recording   ___ Game   ___ Other

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention?
_____
_____

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?
_____
_____

4. What concerns you about the resource?
_____
_____

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?
_____
_____

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?
_____
_____

Support

Staff Suggestion Card

- Maintain neutral body language

- Listen sympathetically and use active listening skills.

- Acknowledge the stress and discomfort they may feel.

- Offer alternative options.

- Explain the collection development policy.

- If resolution from above options is not met, offer the reconsideration form.

- Call and notify your supervisor.

Beyond Book Challenges

- Library displays.
- Programs.
- Meeting rooms.

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Soft or Quiet Challenges

- Internal
  - Professionals alter how they select material
  - Staff bias
  - Library boards
- External
  - Elected officials

What you Can Do?

- Report a challenge to NJLA.

- Report a challenge to ALA.

- Notify the Regional Response Team.

- Support School Media Specialists.

Resources

- ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom Manual

- Library Bill of Rights

- Freedom to Read Statement

- Freedom to View Statement

Support

- NJLA Intellectual Freedom Subcommittee
  https://www.njla.org/

- NJASL Advocacy
  https://www.njasl.org/Book-Challenges

- ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom   https://www.ala.org

- NJ Regional Response Team rrt@njasl.org   **join us!** bit.ly/librrt

Questions?

Thank you!