

# CCSD Library

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### As Answered during our School Library Panel on October 7th

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#### 1. What is the process for deciding which books/materials to include in the collection?

- **Answer:** The process of selecting materials for the library collection is collaborative and thoughtful. We take into account student requests and vet books by reviewing them for age appropriateness, checking reviews from professional sources, and discussing with other librarians. Students are involved in selection by requesting books. For example, many of our secondary schools have a Teen Advisory Board (TAB), where students bring book suggestions, which are then carefully reviewed. We strive to build a collection that reflects our students' interests and needs, adhering to [district policies](#) and state laws. On average, a significant number of new books are added annually, varying by school and budget.
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#### 2. How do you decide what is no longer meeting the needs of students and teachers, and when it's time to "clean house"?

- **Answer:** Books that no longer meet the needs of students and teachers are identified through circulation statistics, relevance, and content updates. If books haven't been checked out in several years, or if they contain outdated information, particularly in non-fiction, they are considered for removal. This process is akin to "weeding a garden," ensuring that the remaining collection is vibrant, useful, and relevant to the students' educational and recreational needs.
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#### 3. How is content curated differently for elementary schools, particularly with sensitive topics like sexuality or violence?

- **Answer:** For elementary students, content is curated with developmental appropriateness as a priority. Topics like sexuality and violence are addressed subtly, if at all, and every book is vetted to ensure it aligns with elementary guidelines. Librarians use professional reviews and input from teachers and parents to ensure materials are suitable. Parents can also give input by reviewing books and providing feedback, especially when they have concerns about particular titles.
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#### **4. What strategies are effective for fostering strong relationships between librarians, parents, and educators?**

- **Answer:** Collaboration is key to fostering strong relationships. Librarians work closely with parents and educators through committees, such as the school community council, where they can provide input on book selection. Open dialogue is encouraged through meetings, suggestion boxes, and occasional book review groups where parents and staff discuss potential books for the library. Schools support these partnerships by maintaining transparency in the book selection process.
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#### **5. When do you select books for the library, and where does the budget come from?**

- **Answer:** Book selection is an ongoing process, with much of the selection work occurring over the summer. The budget for purchasing books comes from school and district funds, supplemented by grants and donations. Librarians carefully manage these funds, often seeking additional financial support through community grants and fundraising opportunities.
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#### **6. How do you ensure that students from minority groups see themselves represented in the library?**

- **Answer:** Representation in the library is a top priority. We strive to include books that serve as "mirrors" where students can see themselves, as well as "windows" that allow them to see into the lives of others. We actively seek out diverse titles, including those that feature different cultures, races, gender identities, and experiences, ensuring that every student can find a book that reflects their identity.
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#### **7. How are libraries complying with Utah's HB 29, which mandates the removal of pornographic materials from schools?**

- **Answer:** Utah libraries follow the Bright Line Rule to ensure compliance with HB 29. Any material containing descriptions or depictions of explicit sexual content, such as human genitals in a state of arousal or acts of sexual intercourse, is prohibited. Librarians regularly review materials and are vigilant in removing any content that violates these guidelines, ensuring the school library remains a safe space for students.
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## 8. What are the hidden costs of book challenges?

- **Answer:** Book challenges incur several hidden costs, including the potential need to purchase multiple copies of the challenged book for review by the committee. There are also significant time commitments for librarians, teachers, parents, and school board members serving on the review committee who must read and evaluate the material, as well as the administrative work involved in processing the challenge. These costs can add up, both financially and in terms of staff time.
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## 9. Can you share a time when a child's life was changed by a book they found at the school library?

- **Answer:** There are many instances where students' lives have been positively impacted by finding the right book. For example, one student who had never checked out a book in fifth grade found a book that resonated with him, leading him to become an avid reader. In high school, another student found deep emotional connection and family discussions sparked by a book that addressed difficult themes, showing the power of literature in fostering empathy and personal growth.
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## 10. Would a national rating system for books, similar to movies, be helpful?

- **Answer:** While a national rating system might be helpful in giving students and parents a starting point for understanding the content of books, it is not a practical solution due to the sheer volume of books published each year. Rating systems are also subjective, and what may be acceptable to one person may not be to another. Therefore, teaching students to make informed choices about what they read is crucial.
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## 11. What does a typical school day in the library look like?

- **Answer:** The library is a hub of activity throughout the day. Students come in to check out books, work on homework, play educational games, or engage in literacy-related activities. Librarians often teach classes on digital literacy, information literacy, research skills, and media literacy. During lunch, the library is a popular gathering place for students to relax, play games, and engage in quiet activities. The library is always busy, with hundreds of students passing through its doors every day.
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## 12. How have you seen students develop empathy through reading?

- **Answer:** Reading allows students to step into the shoes of others, experiencing different cultures, perspectives, and emotions. Books, especially those that address life challenges, can help students understand the struggles of others, fostering a sense of empathy. For example, books about children overcoming adversity, navigating cultural differences, or dealing with personal challenges have helped students develop a deeper understanding of people's experiences that differ from their own.
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## 13. How do librarians manage the emotional toll of book challenges and controversies surrounding library content?

- **Answer:** While the current climate around book challenges can be emotionally taxing, librarians are committed to their work and feel supported by their communities. Balancing these challenges involves maintaining open communication, relying on established policies, and staying focused on the goal of providing a well-rounded, inclusive collection for students. It can be disheartening at times, but the support from students, parents, and fellow educators helps maintain a positive and forward-thinking environment.
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For more information or additional questions, please reach out to a library media specialist. Thank you for supporting our school libraries!