
Reeths-Puffer Schools

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3/30/2023

Reeths-Puffer Schools Classroom Library Best Practices and Guidelines

(Preparation of this document has been guided by R-P Board Policies 2240: Controversial Subjects, 9130: Public Complaints (3rd section), and policies sourced from professional organizations in this field)

Reeths-Puffer Schools Classroom Libraries Purpose and Guidance

Classroom Libraries and Their Essential Role in Literacy Development:

- Classroom libraries “play a key role in providing access to books and promoting literacy; they have the potential to increase student motivation, engagement, and achievement and help students become critical thinkers, analytical readers, and informed citizens.” (from [NCTE Statement on Classroom Libraries](#))
- Numerous studies document the numerous benefits to students when they have access to classroom libraries. Among the benefits are higher reading achievement, increased comprehension across all areas of study and a more comprehensive vocabulary.
- Reeths-Puffer Schools believe in creating a culture of belonging and inclusivity which leads to every learner feeling welcome and included. Diverse and inclusive classroom libraries are one component of creating this culture.
- As educators, we know that “no book is right for every student” but every student deserves access to reading materials that are right for them. “Classroom libraries offer ongoing opportunities for teachers to work with students as individuals to find books that will ignite their love for learning, calm their fears, answer their questions, and improve their lives in any of the multiple ways that only literature can.” (from [NCTE Statement on Classroom Libraries](#))

Reeths-Puffer Schools Aim to Create Classroom Libraries Which Will:

- offer a wide range of materials to appeal to and support the needs of students with different interests and abilities.
- provide access to multiple resources that reflect diverse perspectives, lived experiences and varied content.
- utilize age/grade recommendations for books by consulting professional reviews, recommended lists and selecting accordingly.
- support the importance of choice in reading materials as research supports students’ increased engagement when reading is self selected.
- allow students increased reading opportunities beyond the required curriculum. Materials in classroom libraries are not required reading materials.

Professional Staff Guidelines for Classroom Libraries

When selecting materials for the classroom library, professional teaching staff will utilize this guidance:

- Make use of reviews by professional accredited organizations and reviewing sources. (see list provided)
- Be mindful of age/grade recommendations for books as found in professional reviews and recommended lists.
- Contain content that is appropriate to the age and maturity level of the students.
- Reflect diverse perspectives, cultural practices, and social identities
- Depict real people, places, events, and time periods with authenticity, accuracy and objectivity (primarily a NF issue)
- Consider the manner in which the following subjects are treated when considering literature for 7-12 school classroom libraries:
 - mental health
 - weapons
 - drinking/drugs/tobacco
 - Religion
 - racial sensitivity
 - Sexually explicit content

Professional Reviewing Sources and Recommended Book Lists

Reviewing Sources

[Novelist Plus](#) (MEL resource) This link may or may not work for you...I know I'm authenticated in multiple ways. Worst case scenario is that you will have to enter your driver's license number to authenticate. This resource can be searched in a myriad of ways - grade levels, genre, recommended reading lists. The results display is similar to a card catalog. Reviews are part of the record.

[Novelist K-8 Plus](#) (MEL resource) - Same comments/info as above.

[Library and Information Science Source](#) (MEL resource)

This one would need brief directions attached to it as well. Indexes many library professional journals which provide book reviews.

[Titlewave](#) - This is a Follett resource utilized heavily by Library Media Specialists. Users need to create accounts. Once an account is created, books can be searched by title, author etc. The great thing about titlewave is it provides a list of all awards and reviews the book has received and provides full text reviews from the major reviewing sources.

Professionally Reviewed/Recommended Book Lists Including Children/Young Adult Award Winning Titles

[YALSA Book FINDER](#)

Book database provided by Young Adult Library Services Association which contains all of the titles which have received a book award/recommendation from YALSA. See [About](#) for details. Searchable by genre, author, award, award year. Focuses on materials for 12-18 year olds.

[YALSA Teen Book FINDER App](#)

This is the app version of the above. Available for both Android and Apple devices.

[Children's Notable Lists](#) (would have relevance for grades 5/6)

[Association for Library Service to Children](#) (would have relevance for grades 5/6)

Includes well known awards like the Newbery Medal as well as others mostly known to library professionals.

[NCTE Book Rationales Database](#)

A fairly new resource from the National Council of Teachers of English. From the site "Rationales are important tools for educators and school librarians to use in selecting and defending books. This database can be searched by title, author, and grade level to find a rationale for a book to incorporate into the classroom or school library, or to defend a text that is being challenged. You can also explore new pieces of literature to incorporate into your curriculum to further enrich students' learning." Rationales are constantly being added to the database. Includes popular and new titles in addition to what might be considered more traditional titles.

[Kirkus Book Reviews - Young Adult](#)

[Kirkus Book Reviews - Graphic Novels and Comics](#)

[Kirkus Book Reviews - Childrens](#)

All three are searchable by subgenre, age range, and format

[School Library Journal Reviews](#)

Primarily review titles published in the past two years.. Search using categories such as topic specific book lists, individual books, collections, best of, and authors and illustrators.

[The Horn Book Guide/Reviews Database](#)

This authoritative database offers critical reviews by professionals of hardcover trade books. There are more than 70,000 reviews. Multiple ways to search including author, title, and subject.

Search Strategy: search for title and add the words "professional review." Looking for reviews by School Library Journal, Kirkus, BookList, NYT

Classroom Library Parental/Guardian Information

District/Teacher Parental Classroom Library Communication letter will be included in the annual registration process.

- Affected teaching staff create letters which are then approved by the Director of Teaching and Learning.
- The Parent letter includes an explanation of the purpose of classroom libraries. Can be taken directly from the beginning of "Classroom Library Best Practices and Guidelines document." Perhaps have a parent letter on one side and this on the back side.
- Parental letter will include a statement which emphasizes that reading materials from a teacher's classroom library is a Choice. No required readings come from a teacher's classroom library.
- Parental letter will include summary of the Professional Staff Classroom Library Guidelines

Parental Objections to Materials in Classroom Library

Request for Review of Classroom Library Materials

Title _____

Author _____

Grade Level of Classroom Library _____

Request initiated by: _____

Address _____ Telephone _____

Person making request represents:

Individual: _____

Other group (Name): _____

Instructions: Please answer the following questions as thoroughly as possible using the reverse side, or attachments, if necessary.

1. Have you read the materials in its entirety? _____
If not, what parts did you read? _____
2. To what in this work do you object? (Please be specific, cite page numbers, passages etc.)

3. Why do you object to this material? _____
4. For what age group would you recommend this work? _____
5. Are you aware of the judgment of this material by literary critics? If so, with what judgments do you agree or disagree? _____
6. What action would you like to see taken relative to this material?
_____ Place book in grade appropriate classroom library
_____ Remove book from all classroom libraries

Signature of initiator _____ Date _____

Please return this form to the building principal.

Review Process

When a parent or guardian expresses concern about a book from a classroom library, the following process shall be followed.

1. All concerns, whether oral or written, should first be directed to the classroom teacher whose classroom library contains the item of concern. The situation will be discussed amicably with the concerned person and all efforts will be given to resolving the concern at the classroom level.
2. All concerns, whether oral or written, should have a prompt response from the classroom teacher and conversation/meeting to further understand the concern and begin seeking resolution.
3. If the teacher and parent are not able to resolve the issue through discussion, then the building principal will be brought into the conversation. When the principal and/or teacher cannot resolve the problem through discussion with the complainant (short of removing the material), the person will be informed of their option to request a review of the item for appropriateness in a classroom library of that grade level. If completed, the Request for Review of Classroom Materials document is to be returned to the building principal. The superintendent will be notified of the complaint.
4. The book in question will remain in the classroom library as the review process occurs.
5. If the parent does not have access to the text, the teacher and/or school will provide access to the text, if requested.
6. Upon receipt of the completed form, the building administrator will appoint an ad hoc material review committee to review the item in question. The ad hoc committee shall be comprised of:
 - a. one parent with no vested interest in the item in question
 - b. the district's professional media specialists
 - c. a building level administrator
 - d. two appropriate level teachers (department chair if secondary)
 - e. one appropriate level student (if secondary, if elementary optional)
7. The committee will meet to review the material in light of the objections raised using the following procedures.
 - a. Read or listen to the material in its entirety.
 - b. Check the general acceptance of the material by reading professional reviews and consulting other sources.
 - c. Consider the appropriateness of the material for the age and maturity level of the students for whom it is being used.
 - d. Evaluate the material in light of its accuracy, objectivity, literary value, social and ethical impact, and the use being made of it.

The review committee's decision shall be reached by a simple majority vote.

8. The review committee shall prepare a written report regarding its decision to be filed with the superintendent, principal, and professional involved.
*Recommendations for removal of materials will be brought to the Board of Education by the superintendent for action.

9. The principal shall see that a letter indicating the decision is sent to the complainant within 30 days of the receipt of the written complaint.
10. The decision of the committee may be appealed to the superintendent by the complainant within ten working days. The decision of the superintendent may be appealed within ten working days to the Board of Education.
11. If the case is appealed to the Board of Education, the board shall review the case in public session and advise the complainant in writing of its decision.

No challenged material may be removed solely because it presents ideas that may be unpopular or offensive. Any Board action to remove materials will be accompanied by a statement explaining its reasons for removal.