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Assignment #3
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The following sections will compare the policies on selection and collection development, authorized use and reconsideration of the St. Charles Parish Library Media Centers (preceded by “SCP” notation) to those suggested by the American Library Association (preceded by “ALA” notation), the Guidelines for Library Media Programs in Louisiana Schools (preceded by “LA” notation), and documents from the Bellingham, Washington Public Schools Supervisors’ Resource Bank (preceded by the name of the place and followed with the specific document name).

Objectives

ALA: The purpose of the objective section is to provide a brief description of what the school system is trying to do with its education program. This document suggests that the objectives section state the importance of providing a wide range of education materials with varied viewpoints.

SCP: The “Objectives of Selection” begin the Selection Procedures document. There are eight objectives listed; they are broad statements, most probably written that way because of the wide age range of the students in the school system. The objectives focus on having the library media center provide materials for classroom teachers to utilize while instruction, for students to educate themselves and use in their social and intellectual development, and to provide learning situations for the school community to support the education program of the school. There are no specific grade level goals spelled out; the Louisiana guidelines are used for this. Nothing about providing a variety of viewpoints is mentioned.

LA: The SCP document seems to meet the objectives set out by Standard 7; there is an approved selection and evaluation policy that meets professional standards. Part of the “Selection Principles” section of the document states that materials should be selected to provide opportunities for research, reading, and lifelong learning. They should also support the school’s curriculum and meet diverse needs and provide diverse viewpoints. This is similar to the objectives section in both the ALA and SCP documents.

Bellingham: The main objective in this document is that instructional materials should be selected to support the curriculum, enhance learning, and help students reach the school district’s performance standards. Bellingham breaks down instructional materials into two categories: basic (those that help reach standards) and non-basic (those that enrich the curriculum and learning). Some of the “Goals for Selection of Instructional Materials” are quite similar to SCP’s objectives; these are the ones that discuss ensuring library resources are consistent with the school curriculum and promoting lifelong

learning. Bellingham, however, includes statements about bias and viewpoints in this section (as did the ALA, but not SCP).

Bellingham School District Instructional Materials Policy 2311
(<http://www.bham.wednet.edu/policies/2311Policy.htm>)

Responsibility for Selection

ALA: The policy should include—by indicating which professional position—who is responsible for materials selection. The workbook states that most areas have placed their local school board as being ultimately responsible for what is selected for the schools, a professional in the library media center should be responsible for the day-to-day selection of materials, with input from those people whose recommendations are needed.

SCP: As alluded to in the ALA document, the St. Charles School Board is legally responsible for the selection of library materials. The Board has delegated the selection of library materials to each school’s library media specialist with the assistance of the faculty. It also states that the specialist is responsible for developing a well-balanced collection of professional materials as well as materials for students.

LA: In Chapter 3, the document states that the library media specialist should manage budgets and make purchasing decisions.

Bellingham: The Bellingham School Board is legally responsible for the selection of all instructional materials. There is a District Instructional Materials Committee that includes school staff and members of the community. This committee selects the basic materials. The professional staff selects all non-basic materials. It seems as though the Bellingham board exerts more control than the SCP board.

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(<http://www.bham.wednet.edu/policies/2311Policy.htm>)

Criteria for Selection

ALA: The ALA provides lists of criteria that any professionals who are involved in the selection of library materials should use when deciding what materials to purchase. It makes distinctions when discussing audio/visual resources. There is also a bibliography of resources to consult when selecting materials.

SCP: This is where the SCP Selection Procedures state that a variety of viewpoints—ethnic, religious, political, and cultural—should be included in the collection. The needs of the individual schools should be put first, with keeping general criteria such as timeliness, format, and price in mind. Specific criteria, such as needs of the school program based on requests from members of the school community, are determined by the characteristics of the school program and needs of the community’s students.

LA: Also found in the “Selection Principles” section of the document are statements that echo many of the criteria statements found in the ALA and SCP documents.

Edmonds: This section refers to all instructional materials selected, not just materials for use in the library media centers. Edmonds' criteria are similar to SCP's criteria; materials must support student learning and materials must include variety in viewpoints.

Procedures for Selection of Instructional Materials

<http://staff.edmonds.wednet.edu/users/kernsj/7000/7250r1.htm>

Procedures for Selection

ALA: This is a very detailed part of the document. It states that many things should be included in it: the steps for selecting materials from beginning to end, handling requests from members of the school community, and how to review existing collections, among other things. Also in it should be lists of the types of materials in the collection and how they are obtained.

SCP: School library media specialists should evaluate the collection, consult selection aids, and consult a variety of teachers. Lists of selection tools for books, periodicals, and films are included. There is a separate collection development policy that lists how often books on geographic regions, atlases, almanacs, records books, and encyclopedias should be rotated and weeded. It does not seem to be as detailed as what the ALA document has in mind.

LA: The "Selection Principles" section states that acquisition of materials must be guided by using professional selection tools.

Edmonds: Although the name of the document is "Procedures for Selection of Instructional Materials," section IV of the document is where procedures most similar to those outlined in the ALA workbook are found. There are different procedures depending on what type of material is in question (major course adoption, individual class materials, etc.) These are more detailed than those outlined by SCP.

Procedures for Selection of Instructional Materials

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Special Areas (such as gifts)

ALA: Special areas of materials that are being considered are detailed under the procedure section; these include items in professional collections, gift materials, textbooks, audio/visual materials, and when outside advisors should be used to help evaluate materials.

SCP: Gift materials are accepted or rejected by using the aforementioned selection criteria, sets of materials are purchased only to fill a definite need, and out of date or no longer useful materials are withdrawn. Where the ALA has many statements on a variety of materials, SCP has a few, are very broad, and are tacked onto the end of the procedures section.

Policies on Controversial Materials

ALA: It is recommended that there be a section where statements on intellectual freedom and its importance are stated. The first amendment and the ALA's *Library Bill of Rights* are given as examples.

SCP: There is no separate policy on controversial materials in the document; the sort of information that ALA recommends be in this section are included in the "Reevaluation of Instructional Materials" section.

Edmonds: This document was mentioned on a document linked from the Supervisor's Resource Bank, but I found it on the web. This "Procedure for Use of Controversial Material" is a detailed document that addresses selection considerations, how to be prepared for a possible challenge to a controversial resource, and how to prepare students before utilizing the resource in question.

7100-R1 – Procedure for Use of Controversial Material

<http://staff.edmonds.wednet.edu/users/kernsj/7000/7100r1.htm>

A Reconsideration Policy (with sample letters, instructions, request forms)

ALA: This is the longest and most detailed section of the workbook. It outlines the steps that should be taken when a book is challenged and provides sample documents to use throughout the process.

SCP: There is a "Reevaluation of Instructional Materials" policy as well as a document that outlines how to handle complaints from the public about textbook and other instructional materials. There is a form that citizens who request a reevaluation of materials fill out. It is stated that the school board has the final decision concerning controversial materials, but before that occurs, a committee designated by the superintendent will meet and discuss the material in question.

I was able to review documents pertaining to an actual challenge to *Brave New World* at Hahnville High School in 2001. The packet included the aforementioned "Reevaluation of Instructional Materials," the reevaluation request filed by the parent making the challenge, excerpts of Louisiana statutes that are pertinent to intellectual freedom, district standards for English Language Arts, background information and reviews on *Brave New World*, information on previous challenges to the book, background on the author, and the eventual school board recommendation. All of these things seemed very comprehensive.

LA: The document states that there should be a district-approved reconsideration policy but has no further instructions.

A Recommended List of Selection Tools

ALA: There are two lists of selection materials; one is a list of bibliographies and one is a list of current reviewing media.

SCP: There is a list of books that are to be used as selection tools (none are on the ALA list), and there is a list of periodicals to be used (a good number are on the ALA list). They seem to encompass a wide variety of subject and levels.

Bellingham: The “Selection Sources” section of the document is well organized and detailed. It provides web addresses for the sources as well as a concise description. This is much more useful than the lists found in the ALA or SCP document.

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Selection Criteria for Non-print Materials/Websites

ALA: There is no separate section for non-print materials or websites. Mention is made throughout the sections of the workbook to non-print materials, but there is nothing specific.

SCP: There is a separate document that spells out the guidelines for Selection and Use of Videos/DVDs. It states that all technology obtained will be utilized to help reach the school system’s goals, thus they have written guidelines that specifically address the selection and use of videos and DVDs. Videos and DVDs must be selected and purchased under the same policies as other materials. Their use must support and/or enhance the curriculum and understanding of the topic of study. A document from the Bellingham Public Schools (*Videos and DVDs in School*) is cited in this document.

LA: The “Guidelines for Technology and Audio-Visual Resources” outlines quantitative computer workstation requirements as well as other equipment (overhead projectors, television sets, scanners, digital cameras, copy machines, etc.). There are no guidelines for selection for these materials, obviously. Under “Philosophy” in the “Information Access” section, however, it states that it is now understood that commonly used materials should be available in an electronic format as well as print to better serve students who have different learning styles.

Bellingham: There is a “Non-Basic Instructional Materials – AV Evaluation Form” in the document that evaluators of A/V materials have to fill out. There are five areas where the evaluator has to give a numerical ranking of how well the materials stands up next to those standards: curriculum appropriate, fair and balanced, well produced, accurate and current, and developmentally appropriate. It gives good examples and asks good questions of what the resources should include. There is also a separate “Instructional Software Evaluation Form.”

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An Authorized Use or Internet Use Policy

SCP: There is an authorized use policy that is sent home at the beginning of the school year for parents and students to review and sign. This gives the student permission to access online resources. It is not included with the library documents.

Washington State: There is a document, “Network Conditions of Use and Acceptable Use Policies” that outlines the state’s stance on this topic. It is similar to the SCP document, in that it discusses what acceptable usage of online resources is and outlines what happens when the conditions are violated.

D-20 Network: Developing an Acceptable Use Policy

<http://www.k12.wa.us/K-20/AUP.aspx>

Conclusions

It was obvious that St. Charles Parish followed the ALA *Workbook for Selection Policy Writing* to write their Selection Policy. It still seems to need some revision and rethinking to be fleshed out and as detailed as what the ALA suggests. Otherwise, it was easy to follow, easy to understand, and made sense. It seemed to make good points and provides a firm basis for school library media specialists in St. Charles Parish to follow when choosing materials for their students.

The Louisiana document doesn’t follow the same setup as the ALA and SCP documents, but it echoes a lot of the statements made in both. It also provides quantitative information as to how many books (per student) the school library should have and what types of books should be seriously considered for purchase. There are charts for three divisions of collection guidelines (elementary, middle, high school) that give basic, advanced, and exemplary quantities for many different types of resources. It definitely fleshes out the ALA guidelines for Louisiana School Media Centers, and St. Charles Parish library media specialists use parts of it when making their material selections.

The documents found from the Supervisor’s Resource Bank were well thought out and quite detailed. Since I chose the documents that I thought were the best example of the topic being discussed to compare to the SCP document, I cannot say that one particular document was heads above the rest; however, the ones that I chose to use helped me to better evaluate the SCP document. There are definitely things that St. Charles Parish could add to its policies after reading over some of these, but overall, I think the SCP document held its own.