

Sent via Active Campaign to Ontario Directors of Education

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RE: OSLA's A Guide to the Selection and Deselection of School Library Resources

The Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) recently released [A Guide to the Selection and Deselection of School Library Resources](#), a resource that provides:

- information, best practices, and resources to support the selection and deselection of school library learning resources.
- resources to help school boards navigate concerns, questions, and/or challenges related to school library materials.

This resource is for school library professionals, educators, staff, administrators, school boards, students, and families. It was also developed with the general public in mind, for anyone interested in understanding how resources are curated for a [School Library Learning Commons \(SLLC\)](#).

This guide comes at a pivotal time, when Canada's school libraries are faced with a [growing number of calls to remove or restrict access to books](#), especially those that reflect LGBTQIA2S+ perspectives, contain characters of diverse gender identities or racial backgrounds, and deal with sexual health and education. In the face of those challenges to students' right to read and freedom of expression, the OSLA expanded its [Sample Selection Policy \(2017\)](#) into a comprehensive guide for the entire school community. The OSLA is excited to share this resource with you and is committed to working with your board to ensure that students benefit from a well-resourced school library that supports success in core academic skills.

An environmental scan of Ontario's 72 publicly funded school boards revealed that only 42% of school boards have a publicly available policy and/or procedure for the selection of supplemental/school library resources. This is despite the Ministry of Education stipulating that boards are "expected to ensure that an effective process is in place for the selection and approval of such materials for use in their schools" ([Guidelines for Approval of Textbooks \(2008\)](#)).

Recent events in some of the Greater Toronto Area's largest school boards underscore the importance of having a *transparent* and *readily accessible* selection policy. This policy plays a vital role in preventing misunderstandings regarding the criteria for adding or removing resources from a school library. The OSLA, thus, encourages all school boards to have publicly available information on their collection development and weeding practices that can be understood by any member of the school community.

How to Use the Guide:

1. Develop or update your policy/procedure on the selection of supplemental and school library resources. *Refer to Section 5. Creating Policy and Procedure for School Library Materials.*

2. Check your policy/procedure against provincial legislature and Ministry of Education policies. *Refer to Appendices 3. and 4.*
3. Address challenges to materials consistently and without bias, and in doing so, protect your staff by reaffirming their professional expertise in selecting resources. *Refer to Section 4. School Library Collection Development and Maintenance.*
4. Provide additional training to school library staff on developing culturally-responsive and diverse collections that align with other board and Ministry policies. *Refer to Section 4.4. Selection Criteria for Library Resources.*
5. Inform students and families on how books end up in their school library by using this Guide as a reference point.

[Download A Guide to the Selection and Deselection of School Library Resources](#)

The Ontario Ministry of Education continues to recognize the essential value of school libraries. Moreover, along with supporting curriculum achievement, school libraries foster students' love of reading, especially at the elementary level. Recreational reading has been shown to have a positive impact on literacy scores, success in science, and students' social and civic engagement.

The Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) is a recognized subject matter association, consisting of more than 1,000 front-line Teacher Librarians and school library staff essential for delivering Ontario's primary and secondary curriculum. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss this Guide and ways we can work with you to ensure that your students have access to a well-resourced and staffed school library.

Sincerely,



Johanna Gibson-Lawler
President
Ontario School Library Association



Michelle Arbuckle
Executive Director
Ontario Library Association

About our organization:

Founded in 1900, the **Ontario Library Association** (OLA) is the oldest continually operating non-profit library association in Canada. With more than 4,000 members, the OLA is the largest library association in the country. We offer opportunities for learning, networking, and providing input into public policy. The **Ontario School Library Association** (OSLA) is a division of OLA consisting of 1,000 members who work in Ontario's school libraries.

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