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A Guide to the Selection and Deselection of School Library Resources

Ontario School Library Association
A Division of the Ontario Library Association

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1 Purpose

This guide 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.

As directed by the Ontario Ministry of Education, school boards have "the responsibility for the selection of supplementary resources for use in their schools." Boards are also "expected to ensure that an effective process is in place for evaluation and approval and that the resources selected are age-appropriate, free from bias and discrimination and enable the promotion of inclusion" (The Ontario Curriculum Review and Revision Guide).

Who is this guide for?

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

2 Scope

This guide outlines principles for selecting and deselecting school library resources from Kindergarten to Grade 12. School library resources include print, audio-visual, and virtual resource collections, and any other resources within a school library used for formal and informal learning, as well as reading engagement. These principles and procedures are based on established educational and library practices. They align with the Ministry of Education and the Government of Ontario's expectations. School boards in other jurisdictions may adapt this guide as needed.

A note about libraries:

A school library serves a specific population and purpose. A public library is an excellent resource for students and family members but has a broader scope than a school library. Both types of libraries uphold intellectual freedom and have policies and processes to guide decisions about library resources based on their mandates. For example, a school library may remove a novel because it no longer meets students' learning and curriculum needs. In contrast, the public library may continue to offer that same novel as it serves the broader interests of the community.

3 Definitions

Censorship: Censorship is the removal, suppression, or restricted circulation of literary, artistic, or educational images, ideas, and/or information because they are morally or otherwise objectionable. While the selector seeks reasons to include material in the collection, the censor seeks reasons to exclude material from the group.

Censorship also encompasses not providing information in alternative formats (e.g., braille, audio, large print, and tactile graphics) for those who require them. By not giving accessible formats, individuals with disabilities are restricted in exercising their rights to seek and receive information. Learn more about how to make information accessible through the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

Culturally Responsive: Being culturally responsive means using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of diverse students to render learning more effective and meaningful. Culturally responsive resources are, thus, resources that reflect the distinct and diverse backgrounds of learners and connect students' cultures, languages, and life experiences to what they learn in school. Culturally responsive resources also offer multiple perspectives that may not be represented in the classroom, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. These resources are, therefore, crucial for broadening learners' worldviews and enabling them to be more critically conscious of their environments. Learn more about culturally responsive pedagogy here.

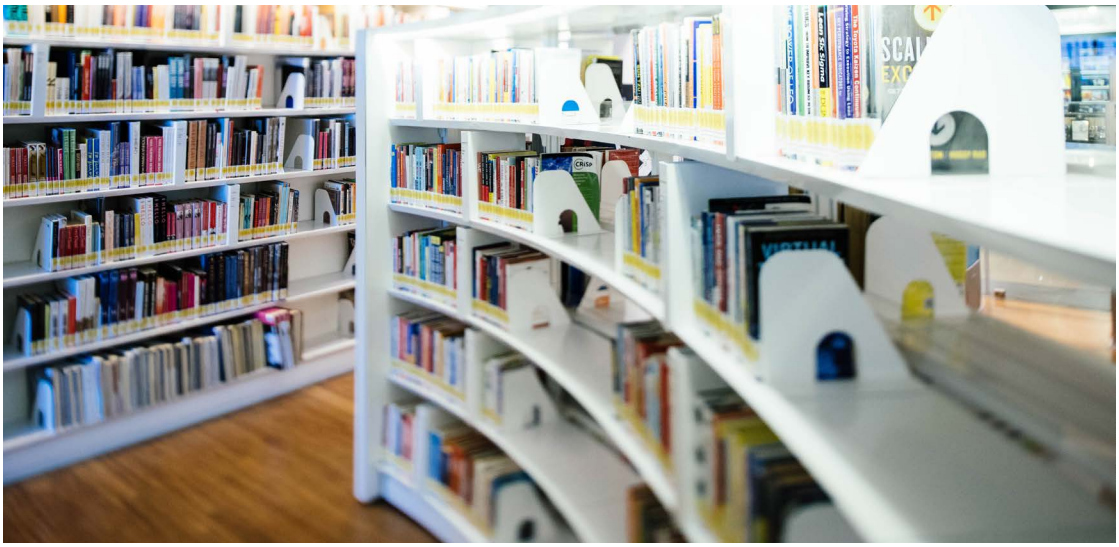
Curriculum: Curriculum refers to the set of learning expectations that outline the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn and apply by the end of a grade or course. Each subject area has its curriculum.

Intellectual Freedom: Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides free access to all expressions of ideas through which all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Libraries uphold intellectual freedom by implementing collection development and selection procedures. Materials are not excluded from library collections based on race, place of birth, origin, ethnic origin, ethnicity, citizenship, age, creed, disability, family structure, sex, and sexual orientation.

Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Part 1, Section 2, all individuals in Canada are guaranteed freedom of expression as a fundamental freedom. Under Article 13 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is guaranteed the right to freedom of expression, including "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice." A school library's selection policy is an essential tool for protecting the right to freedom of expression for students and staff.

Learning Resources: Learning resources refer to any print or non-print materials, including various audio-visual and digital materials, used by teachers, teacher-librarians, library professionals and students for formal or informal teaching and/or learning purposes. Additionally, in several cultures, elders and knowledge keepers play a vital role as the primary sources of wisdom and information, serving as invaluable 'learning resources' to pass down knowledge from one generation to the next.

Weeding: A term used in the library profession to describe the removal or deselection process of library materials from the collection. Examples include the removal of an item because the item is damaged, the content is no longer accurate, or the content no longer meets the needs of the provincial curriculum. In most cases, if the item is unsuitable for further use, it will be disposed of.



4 School Library Collection Development and Maintenance

4.1 Understanding the School Library

What is a school library?
A school library is "a physical and digital learning space within a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves the information needs of its students and the curriculum needs of its teachers and staff. A school library provides a collection of education materials appropriate to the grade levels of the school. A school library is managed by a school librarian who is dedicated to enhancing the cognitive, personal, social, and cultural growth of students and teachers through activities and services related to reading, inquiry, and research." – IFLA-UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2025), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

The school library, also known as the Library Learning Commons (LLC), supports and enhances teaching and learning for the entire school community. A school library program enables students to develop a love for reading for both learning and pleasure, develop literacy and critical thinking skills, and obtain access to resources for all subject areas. School library professionals, particularly teacher-librarians, collaborate and partner with classroom and content-area teachers to achieve and exceed curricular goals. At its core, the school library is an open and accessible information and technological space that supports, extends, and individualizes a school's curriculum, enhancing students' ability to grow personally, socially, culturally, and academically.

Library Learning Commons (LLC)
A learning commons is a whole school approach to building a participatory learning community. The library learning commons is the physical and virtual collaborative learning hub of the school. It is designed to engineer and drive future-oriented learning and teaching throughout the entire school. Inquiry, project/problem-based learning experiences are designed as catalysts for intellectual engagement with information, ideas, thinking, and dialogue. Reading thrives, learning literacies and technology competencies evolve, and critical thinking, creativity, innovation and playing to learn are nourished. Everyone is a learner; everyone is a teacher working collaboratively toward excellence. – *Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada* (2014), Canadian School Libraries

Although usership differs, libraries in both elementary and secondary schools operate on the same principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. School library professionals select and de-select library resources based on the same foundational concepts (outlined below), regardless of education level, considering the different needs of the specific school context and populations they serve.

What is a school library resource?

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection, we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books. – *Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors (1990)*, Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop

While classroom textbooks are selected and approved by the Ministry of Education, school library resources and other supplementary resources are usually selected and approved at the discretion of individual school boards. School library personnel are professionally trained to select such resources. However, school library resources do not only refer to resources used for formal and informal learning. School library resources include texts read for leisure and pleasure, i.e., fictional narratives. School libraries allow students to read independently for enjoyment, developing their literacy skills outside the classroom.

How are school library resources selected?

The purpose of education is to investigate ideas and to prepare individuals for creative and productive lives. Access to ideas is essential to promoting and encouraging freedom of thought and expression. School library resources should:

- be selected to encourage critical/independent thinking and objective judgment;
- present different points of view;
- represent diverse authorial voices, and contribute to the student's growing understanding and appreciation of notions of culture and ideas of the past and present;
- help students find their place and voice in the larger social and cultural narrative they inhabit outside of school;
- contribute to students' understanding and appreciation for media;
- help develop critical analysis and viewing skills;
- and provide the opportunity to make informed judgments about media;
- support student's right to equitable access to reading and information;
- provide resources that support structured literacy and reading development.

It shall be the function of a school library to provide a wide range of materials in diverse formats that consider the abilities and maturity levels of the students served.

Students are expected to be provided with culturally responsive resources throughout the educational experience that allows them to see themselves and others reflected in the curriculum. School library resources, along with all other scholarly resources, should, thus, portray people of different races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, religions, ages, and other identity markers in non-stereotypical settings, occupations and activities and comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code concerning the prohibited grounds of discrimination.

4.2 Professional Expertise and the School Library

School library professionals receive special training in developing and curating the library collection. Some credentials include a Bachelor of Education (including Additional Qualifications as a Teacher-Librarian), a Master of Library and Information Science, and a Library Technician Diploma. School library professionals are central in informing board policy on library selection policy and processes.

As literacy and technology experts, teacher-librarians and school library professionals lead learning across school communities. They teach students and coach staff by:

- designing cross-disciplinary learning experiences;
- promoting and celebrating the joy of reading;
- collaborating for early literacy development using the Science of Reading as a foundation;
- engaging with families and community members to build cultural understanding;
- growing digital competencies and future-ready skills with a focus on information literacy;
- empowering students to deal with misinformation and develop positive digital citizenship;
- modelling best practices for supporting student literacy and inquiry to staff;
- promoting critical thinking and inquiry-based activities with hands-on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) tasks; and
- curating quality print and digital learning resources, ensuring equitable access that reflects students' lived experiences and the experiences of those who have been oppressed and silenced.

The ethical responsibility of the school library professional

As school libraries provide equitable and open access to quality information sources, school library professionals are responsible for creating a safe environment where students can explore diverse topics, even controversial ones.

> All school library professionals, regardless of their personal beliefs and biases, are expected to observe high ethical standards, ensuring that library users can exercise their rights to freedom of expression.

4.3 Managing the School Library Collection

Retention and weeding of school library resources
Retention and weeding are the professional, systematic practice of re-evaluating resources in a library collection and deciding whether they should be kept, disposed of, or replaced. More specifically, weeding, or deselection, refers to removing materials that no longer serve the purpose or scope of the library collection.

School library professionals often use the CREW (Continuous Review, Evaluation and Weeding) Method as a framework for weeding, following the **MUSTIE** criteria:

M	**Misleading**: Factually inaccurate; obsolete information; contains racial, cultural, or sexual stereotyping.
U	**Ugly**: Refers to the physical condition of a book (i.e., does not apply to e-books), including outdated appearance, wear and tear, dirty or mouldy, beyond repair or not worth repairing, and infested (e.g., contains dust mites) or poses a threat to physical health (e.g., mould spores)
S	**Superseded**: The resource has been replaced by a newer edition or a more current resource or information format.
T	**Trivial**: No discernible literary, scientific, or educational merit; does not engage today's readers (e.g., outdated pop culture).
I	**Irrelevant**: No longer serves the needs or interests of the school community.
E	**Elsewhere**: Difficult to maintain a useful collection on the topic. May choose to refer borrowers to more comprehensive collections available from other sources.

Source: Collection Diversity Toolkit - Equity-informed Weeding, Canadian School Libraries, and CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries (2012), Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Reasons for weeding - practical examples:

- The book is so old that it is physically falling apart and no longer usable by the school community.
- A new resource edition has been released with updated information; the older edition is no longer relevant and should be replaced.
- The resource depicts First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in a stereotypical way that does not accurately reflect their sociocultural reality. It also contradicts policies on diversity and inclusion as outlined by other school board documents or the Ministry of Education.

A note for school library professionals on tracking weeded resources:
As weeding is a planned, systematic process, keeping track of materials removed from your library's collection over time is essential. Gathering this data helps identify patterns and learn information such as what types of resources are being weeded the most, how the needs and interests of the school community are changing, and, most significantly, what kind of budget is required to replenish the library with new materials.

What does it mean to challenge or ban a book?

Banning books gives us silence when we need speech. It closes our ears when we need to listen. It makes us blind when we need sight. – Stephen Chbosky, author of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower.*

A challenge is an attempt to remove or restrict materials based on the objections of a person or group, while a banning is a removal of those materials. Any school community member can express concern about a particular resource. School leadership should, thus:

- have an appropriate policy and procedure in place for responding to such challenges;
- acknowledge concerns in a respectful and unbiased manner;
- provide context on the role of the school library professional in the selection of materials;
- review their policy and procedure regularly to ensure alignment with best practices;
- and maintain the right of educators to select and deselect materials based on sound, professional criteria.



[Visual Essay courtesy of Tina Zita](#).

Most concerns can be handled informally. However, a formal reconsideration procedure must take place for situations that cannot be dealt with informally.

"It is very important to be clear that the role of the reconsideration procedure is not to assess the resource in question according to the values of the challenger. Rather, concerns are considered on the basis of compliance with the principles for selecting and using resources as represented by the selection guideline document. In the formal procedure, the person or persons requesting reconsideration must demonstrate how the resource in question fails to comply with these established guidelines." – Canadian School Libraries Collection Diversity Toolkit

4.4 Selection Criteria for Library Resources

The criteria outlined below apply to all learning resources. Although not all school library resources will meet all the requirements listed below, staff members are expected to exercise their professional expertise, judgment, and sensitivity to apply the criteria when choosing resources.

a) Connection to Curriculum and Student Interest

- How is this resource connected to the curriculum?
- To cultivate a love of reading amongst students, the student voice must be valued in selecting and purchasing materials. Did students ask for this resource? Was their opinion considered in its selection?

b) Suitability for Students and School Community

- Will the resource enrich the learning experiences of students?
- Will the resource sustain the interest of students?
- Will the resource be appropriate to the maturity and experience of students?
- Do individual students see themselves (their identities and lived experiences) and the experiences of historically oppressed groups reflected in a selection of the materials? Does the resource resonate with readers?
- Will the resource be appropriate for the learning styles and skills of the intended audience?
- Is the material available in accessible formats to meet the learning needs of every student, including students who have disabilities or are neurodivergent?

c) Nature and Degree of Bias, Equity, and Inclusiveness

- Are the experiences of people from various races, religions, genders, sexual orientations, classes, abilities, and ages represented? If yes, how are they being represented?
- Are First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples and a range of their lived experiences represented from both a historical and contemporary perspective? Were knowledge keepers and/or cultural advisors consulted when selecting these materials, when necessary?
- Does the material depict individuals and groups in various social, economic, and political environments?
- Does the resource address issues from a variety of perspectives?
- Recognizing that bias exists in all learning materials, does the resource perpetuate biases, prejudices, tokenism, or stereotypes that could cause trauma or harm?
- Considering your specific students, does the resource contain content that could re-traumatize or harm them based on their experiences?
- Consider how the resource portrays representations of:

  - Ableism
  - Age
  - Ancestry
  - Body Types
  - Class
  - Creed
  - Culture
  - Ethnicity
  - Family Status
  - First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples
  - Gender Identity
  - Housing
  - Mental Health
  - People with Disabilities
  - Race
  - Religion
  - Sex
  - Sexuality
  - Socio-economic Status

- If the resource does contain tokenism, stereotyping and/or discrimination (including language, visuals, omissions, or distorted perspectives), is it presented from an anti-oppressive stance, and can it be used for anti-discriminatory educational purposes?
- If the material contains controversial issues, can they be addressed in educationally appropriate ways to students and programs respecting culture, religion, and community of origin?

d) Canadian and Indigenous Content and Publication
- Does the material present a broadly-based perspective of Canada within a global framework?
- Does the material present First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples in contemporary contexts where appropriate?
- Does the material present Canada and the people inhabiting it within a cross-cultural context?
- Is the material written, illustrated, or edited by a Canadian or a First Nations, Inuit, or Métis person?
- Is the material edited, printed, or bound in Canada?

e) Quality of Visual and Physical Format
- Is the material well-organized and presented clearly and logically?
- Is the format of illustrations, graphics, pictures, photographs, and artwork of high quality?
- Is the material provided in alternative/accessible formats?

f) Cost and Durability
- Is the cost of the material justified for its use?
- Is the resource durable?

g) Appropriateness to the Program
- Does the material support the curriculum outlined in Ministry, Board, and school documents?
- Does the material support specific programs or modifications, e.g., Special Education, ESL/ELD (English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development), enrichment, remediation, or upgrading?
- Is the material appropriate for the grade(s) and level(s) of instruction?



5 Creating Policy and Procedure for School Library Materials

5.1 What should be in a policy?

A policy is a plan that sets expectations and outlines the components of a program or issue. A policy on the selection of school library materials should be a board-level policy.

- Policy Statement
  - Define the purpose of the policy
- Responsibilities
  - Who is responsible for developing, maintaining, and enforcing this policy?
- Approval and Revision dates
- Links to legislation and/or authoritative resources, such as Ministry of Education policies/directives
- Links to other aligned policies and procedures
- Process and procedure statements
  - What is the process and procedure for selecting and deselection of school library materials?
  - What is the process for a member of the school community to object to any school library materials?

5.2 Policy Considerations

When developing a selection policy, consider the following questions:

- Does this policy align with the curriculum set forth by the Ministry of Education, enrich the curriculum, and enhance academic achievement?
- Does this policy uphold the rights outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms regarding freedom of expression?
- Is this policy free from personal, political, social, or religious views?
- How does this policy intersect with other board policies, such as their equity, diversity, and inclusion policy?
- Does this policy account for student needs regarding abilities, learning styles and maturity?
- Does this policy foster cross-curricular, holistic, and inquiry-based approaches to the curriculum?
- Will this policy address and remove systemic barriers traditionally used to suppress the voice of oppressed cultures and groups?

5.3 What should be in a procedure?

A procedure outlines the steps to be taken to implement the policy.

- Procedure statement
  - What is this procedure for? Under what circumstances shall it be used?
- Responsibilities
  - Who is responsible for executing this procedure?
- Approval dates
- List of procedures
- Reference documents
  - i.e., links to the Selection Policy and other associated Board policies, such as the Board's policy on equity.
- Request for reconsideration of a learning resource form.

5.4 Procedural Considerations

A policy on selecting school library resources not only assists in developing a diverse, enriching collection of materials for the school community but also provides a base for dealing with challenges to such resources.

When developing a procedure for the reconsideration of a school library resource, consider the following:

- How does the procedure intersect with the selection policy already in place?
- Does this procedure allow for reconsideration to be done unemotionally, objectively, and consistently?
- Who participates in this reconsideration procedure, and to what degree? If the resource is depicting a specific group or culture, when possible, are members from that group involved in the reconsideration process?
- How does the reconsideration of this resource impact the school community?
- Does the reconsideration procedure clearly define the difference between selection and censorship?
- Does the procedure clarify that resources are considered in their entirety, not on sections or portions?
- Does the procedure ensure that the challenged resource remains circulated during reconsideration?

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This Guide was developed primarily using the following resources:

- Canadian School Libraries (CSL) Collection Diversity Toolkit
- Waterloo Region District School Board - Selection of Educational Resources 2021
- Toronto District School Board - Selection and Approval of Learning Resources (2003)
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institution (IFLA) School Library Guidelines, 2nd revised edition (2015)
- OSLA Sample Selection Policy (2017)

Appendices

1. Policies and Procedures - Examples

- Waterloo Region District School Board - Selection of Educational Resources (2021)
- Durham District School Board - Learning Resource Selection (2022)
- Right to Read inquiry report (2022)
- Toronto District School Board - Selection and Review of Learning Resources (2025)
- Forest of Reading® Policy on the Selection of Materials (2026)

2. Sample Complaints Form

FORMAL REQUEST FOR SYSTEM RECONSIDERATION OF LEARNING MEDIA

Date Submitted _____ Date Received _____
Initiated By _____
Telephone No. _____ Address _____
Name of School _____

REPRESENTING
Self/Group (give name) _____
Organization (give name) _____

LEARNING RESOURCE QUESTIONED
Type _____
Title _____
Author _____
Publisher/Producer _____ Publishing Date _____

Please respond to the following questions. If additional space is required, use, and attach sheets of paper.

1. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire item? If not, what sections did you review?

2. What concerns do you have about this media? Please be specific – cite pages, passages, etc.

3. What do you believe is the purpose of this learning resource in our school?

4. In your opinion, what is the main idea conveyed through this learning resource?

5. In your opinion, what might be the result of a student's exposure to this learning resource?

6. What do you see as the merits of this learning resource?

7. What judgements of this media by professional critics are appropriate to this discussion?

8. In your opinion, for which age group would this learning resource be appropriate?

9. Please recommend an alternative learning resource that you consider providing the appropriate information and perspective on this topic.

_____
Signature

3. Ministry of Education Guidelines

3.1 The Ontario Curriculum Review and Revision Guide
School boards are required to select Minister-approved textbooks from the provincial Trillium List for use in their schools. They are also responsible for the selection and approval of supplementary learning resources, including consideration of provincially supported resources available through platforms such as Edwin.

Supplementary learning resources
A supplementary resource is any learning resource that is not a textbook. Examples are storybooks, novels, dictionaries, instructional guides and online learning tools. A supplementary resource is not comprehensive. It supports:

- only a limited number of curriculum expectations, or the curriculum expectations in a single strand, as outlined in the curriculum policy document for a subject or course, or
- a limited number of expectations in one or more of the four strands of The Kindergarten Curriculum

School boards have the responsibility for the selection of supplementary resources for use in their schools. Boards are expected to ensure that an effective process is in place for evaluation and approval and that the resources selected are age-appropriate, free from bias and discrimination and enable the promotion of inclusion.

3.2 Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 119 (April 22, 2013)

Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by teachers and staff, and welcome in their learning environment. To this end, boards and their schools will use inclusive curriculum and assessment practices and effective instructional strategies that reflect the diverse needs of all students and the learning pathways that they are taking. Schools must provide students and staff with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about various histories, cultures, and perspectives. Students should be able to see themselves represented in the school's curriculum, programs, and culture. Also, since schools have a pivotal role in developing the workforce of tomorrow, students should be able to see themselves represented in the teaching, administrative, and support staff employed at the school.

Boards are expected to draw upon strategies shown by the evidence to support student success and reduce achievement gaps. These include reviewing resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices to identify and eliminate stereotypes, discriminatory biases, and systemic barriers.

3.3 Considerations for program planning: Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusive Education (2024)

Guiding Principles of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (p. 15)

Equity and inclusive education:

- **is a foundation of excellence**; In a diverse society, equity is a fundamental requirement for educational excellence and high standards of student achievement.
- **meets individual needs**; Equity does not mean treating all students in the same way but, instead, responding to the unique needs of each student and providing the conditions and interventions needed to help them succeed.
- **identifies and eliminates barriers**; All students are supported equitably by identifying and removing discriminatory barriers that limit their ability to achieve their full potential.
- **promotes a sense of belonging**; Equity and inclusive education contribute to every student's understanding of well-being.
- **involves the broad community**; Effective and meaningful school-community partnerships are essential to an equitable and inclusive education system.
- **builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives**; Sound research and analysis of successful policies and practices form the basis for developing and sharing resources.
- **is demonstrated throughout the system**. The ministry, school boards, and schools will incorporate principles of equity and inclusive education throughout their policies, programs, and practices.

Learning opportunities and resources
Schools must give students and staff authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Lessons, projects, and related resources should allow students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum (e.g., providing information about women's contributions to science and technology, about Black inventors, about Aboriginal beliefs and practices related to the environment, using texts written by gay/lesbian authors). Students need to feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by the teachers and staff from whom they are learning and welcomed in their learning environment. (p. 24)

Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices (p. 53)

- A board procedure is in place to assess learning materials for discriminatory bias.
- Resources and instructional strategies:
    - comply with the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code concerning the prohibited grounds of discrimination;
    - show people of different races, sex, and ages in non-stereotypical settings, occupations, and activities;
    - explore the roles and contributions of all peoples in Canada and the factors that shaped these roles;
    - encourage open discussion of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Code (e.g., race, sex, disability, faith) in society, the community, and the school.

3.4 Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007)

Schools will strive to:

1. increase knowledge of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures among all school staff;
2. acquire and provide access to a variety of accurate and reliable Aboriginal resources such as periodicals, books, software, and aids in other media, including materials in the main Aboriginal languages;
3. recognize and promote Native Language and Native Studies programming for all students;
4. foster school-community projects with appropriate cultural components. (p. 19)

4. Ontario Curriculum

4.1 The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8: Language (2023)

The language and literacy program builds on students' prior knowledge, cultures, and language experiences at home and in the community. Effective instruction offers students choices, encourages a sense of agency in learning, and further motivates and engages students in language and literacy learning and the development of self-efficacy. Students should recognize themselves in their language-learning experiences, in the literacy environment of the classroom, and the broader physical surroundings of the school while also having the opportunity to enjoy reading a wide variety of texts and learning about diverse identities, abilities, experiences, families, cultures, and communities.

When educators plan for differentiated language and literacy instruction using various grouping strategies, they purposefully select texts and learning resources to support student learning in a rich, authentic, and meaningful context. They consider the following guiding questions:

- How are the selected texts and resources connected to and aligned with the curriculum expectations?
- Do the learning resources and texts reflect the students' identities, interests, knowledge, lived experiences, and linguistic resources?
- Is the selection of learning resources, such as decodable texts used for decoding instruction, grounded in scientific reading research that follows an evidence-based scope and sequence? Are the resources developmentally appropriate to support students' skill progression?
- For early readers with developing decoding skills, are texts carefully selected to provide opportunities for more advanced language learning through read-aloud of books with rich and diverse vocabulary, language structures, and content?
- What key factors are considered to determine text complexity? For example, are text structure, language features (e.g., conventions, vocabulary, sentence structure, level of cohesion), purpose, content and knowledge demands, and

visual features and graphics all considered?
- Does the text selection include various text forms and genres by creators with diverse identities, perspectives, and experiences, including diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit creators?
- Do the texts represent diverse perspectives, and are they free of bias?
- Are there a range of texts available to engage various student interests, spark curiosity, and provide a sense of excitement and joy?
- Do the texts and learning resources provide students opportunities to practice, extend, and consolidate language and literacy skills meaningfully and authentically?
- Are the texts and learning resources accessible to and inclusive of all students? Are they available in accessible formats? Can they be used with assistive technology?
- Are digital and media resources used to teach about students' rights and responsibilities for online interactions, to develop their digital identity, and to support their learning to navigate online environments while managing their data, security, and privacy?

4.2 The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9-10: English (2023)

The language and literacy program builds on students' prior knowledge, cultures, and language experiences at home and in the community. Effective instruction offers students choices, encourages a sense of agency in learning, and further motivates and engages students in language and literacy learning and the development of self-efficacy. Students should recognize themselves in their language-learning experiences, in the literacy environment of the classroom, and the broader physical surroundings of the school while also having the opportunity to enjoy reading a wide variety of texts and learning about diverse identities, abilities, experiences, families, cultures, and communities.

When educators plan for differentiated language and literacy instruction using various grouping strategies, they purposefully select texts and learning resources to support student learning in a rich, authentic, and meaningful context. They consider the following guiding questions:

- How are the selected texts and resources connected to and aligned with the curriculum expectations?
- Do the learning resources and texts reflect the students' identities, interests, knowledge, lived experiences, and linguistic resources?
- Is the selection of learning resources, such as various texts used for systematic and explicit instruction, grounded in scientific reading research that follows an evidence-based scope and sequence? Are the resources developmentally appropriate to support students' skill progression?
- What key factors are considered to determine text complexity? For example, are text structure, language features (e.g., conventions, vocabulary, sentence structure, level of cohesion), purpose, content and knowledge demands, and visual features and graphics all considered?
- Does the text selection include various text forms and genres by creators with

diverse identities, perspectives, and experiences, including diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit creators?
- Do the texts represent diverse perspectives, and are they free of bias?
- Are there a range of texts available to engage various student interests, spark curiosity, and provide a sense of excitement and joy?
- Do the texts and learning resources provide students opportunities to practice, extend, and consolidate language and literacy skills meaningfully and authentically?
- Are the texts and learning resources accessible to and inclusive of all students? Are they available in accessible formats? Can they be used with assistive technology?
- Are digital and media resources used to teach about students' rights and responsibilities for online interactions, to develop their digital identity, and to support their learning to navigate online environments while managing their data, security, and privacy?

5. Canadian Legislation

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: Section 2(b) of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* protects "freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication."

Criminal Code: Section 63 pertains to Unlawful Assemblies and Riots. Section 297 pertains to defamatory libel. Section 318 pertains to hate propaganda.

Ontario Human Rights Code: Sub-section 13 pertains to infringing on freedom from discrimination.

Chamberlain v. Surrey School District No. 36: In 2002, the Supreme Court of Canada held that a local school board could not impose its religious values by refusing to permit the use of books that depicted same-sex relationships.

6. Resources and Statements

- IFLA-UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2025)
- IFLA School Library Guidelines, 2nd revised edition (June 2015)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
- Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read Report (2022)
- Canadian School Libraries (CSL) Statement: Book Challenges and Censorship in Canada's School Libraries (May 24, 2023)
- *Say NO to Censorship, Say YES to the LLC*!, Canadian School Libraries (CSL) Journal, Spring 2023 Edition (May 24, 2023)
- An Open Letter in Response to WRDSB Parent Concerns (Jan 20, 2023, Waterloo Region District School Board)
- Freedom of Expression Rights and the School Library (Mar 1, 2022, Dianne Oberg)

7. Organizations Supporting Intellectual Freedom

Ontario Library Association (OLA) / Ontario School Library Association (OSLA)

- Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Intellectual Rights of the Individual
- OLA on School Boards Banning and Restricting Books (November 2023)

Canadian School Libraries (CSL)

- Collection Diversity Toolkit

Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA-FCAB)

- Intellectual Freedom Toolkit for Canadian Libraries (2024)

Centre for Free Expression (CFE)

- Library Challenges Database
    - An online database of ongoing challenges to library materials

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

- IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom
- IFLA Statement on Censorship (2019)

Note: This guide is designed with the Province of Ontario in mind, but other provinces can adapt to their provincial laws/curriculum.

