

Tulare County Office of Education

ERS Library Services Department
Selection & Evaluation Policy

2024-2025

Tulare County
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

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TCOE Mission Statement

The mission of the Tulare County Office of Education is to provide quality service and support to the students and school districts of Tulare County. This is achieved by promoting life-long learning opportunities that will help individuals lead healthy and productive lives. We are dedicated to working in a collaborative manner with students, parents, school districts, public agencies, and communities to prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

TCOE Core Values

Build Trusting Relationships

We value individual perspectives, honesty, respect, and honoring our commitments.

Communicate with Care

We value mutual, clear communication, active listening, and the contribution of others.

Grow and Empower

We value continuous learning, monitoring outcomes, celebrating success, and empowering one another.

Commit to Serve

We value empathy, collaboration, responsiveness, and innovation to meet the needs of our team members and those we serve.

TCOE Equity Foundations

Diversity is an Asset

TCOE believes that equity is a fundamental value of a high organization and that diversity is an asset to our community.

Equity is Everyone's Responsibility

Learning about advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion is the responsibility of each member of our organization.

People Should Get What They Need

We are committed to upholding human dignity and ensuring each individual receives what they need to develop to their full potential.

We Have to Work At It

TCOE is dedicated to cultivating equitable practices and policies, examining and overcoming biases, and creating inclusive, just, and empowered communities.

The TCOE ERS Library Vision

The TCOE ERS Library is dedicated to providing support and services to school libraries and school districts throughout Tulare County to promote and nurture student inquiry, literacy, and life-long learning. The TCOE ERS Library seeks to elevate school library services to ensure students have access to high-quality digital and physical resources, dynamic library spaces to serve the whole child, and trained library staff willing and able to serve the needs of today's learners.

In pursuit of the ERS Library's Mission & Vision, the ERS Library will concentrate on the following objectives:

Objective 1: To ensure a successful onboarding process for new school library staff and to offer continuous, valuable training for all school library personnel, resulting in student-centered and proficient professionals well-versed in contemporary school library services and programming.

Objective 2: To collaborate with school districts in developing contemporary school library programs and services that align with the CDE's *Model School Library Standards*, encompassing areas such as print and digital collections, academic research tools and resources, library accessibility, and staffing.

Objective 3: To provide classroom teachers and school libraries with resources to supplement and enhance literacy-centered lessons, support student inquiry, and expand classroom and school library collections with engaging materials for students.

Support for Intellectual Freedom

The ERS Library is guided by the principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretative statements, including "Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program" and The Students' Right to Read statement of the National Council of Teachers of English. See Appendix (in this policy) for the Library Bill of Rights, "Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Program," and The Students' Right to Read statement.

TCOE ERS Library Selection and Evaluation Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and criteria for the selection of materials that are to be included in the ERS Library collection. This policy ensures that the ERS Library collection aligns with the curricular needs and objectives of Tulare County schools, celebrates the freedom to read, is culturally responsive, and meets the needs and interests of students. This policy is guided by the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, the National Council of Teachers of English Students' Right to Read, and the California Department of Education's District Selection Policies recommendations.

GUIDELINES

Library books, as defined by the American Library Association, are trade books that support the school curriculum and include books for recreational reading interests, unlike instructional materials, which are defined by California Education Code Section 60010 (h) as materials that are designated for use by pupils and their teachers as a learning resource and help pupils to acquire facts, skills, or opinions or to develop cognitive processes.

Responsibility & Procedures for Selection of Library Materials

In selecting materials for the ERS Library, the professionally trained library personnel will: evaluate the existing collection; assess curricula needs; examine materials, consult reputable, professionally prepared selection aids, and solicit recommendations for collection considerations from faculty and students.

Selection Criteria

Materials will be selected based on the following criteria:

- **EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:** Materials in the library collection should align with the academic curriculum and support the educational goals of the institution. Library materials should enrich students' learning experiences, foster information literacy skills, and support students' personal interests and recreational reading.
- **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:** Materials in the library collection should represent diverse perspectives, be culturally relevant, and provide a broad spectrum of knowledge and viewpoints. Materials in the collection should authentically represent students' multiple lived experiences and backgrounds, expose students to new ideas and worldviews different from their own, foster empathy, and prioritize representation of historically marginalized communities.

- AGE APPROPRIATENESS: The content in the school library collection should be suitable for the intended audience, considering the maturity, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials are selected.
- QUALITY AND ACCURACY: The content in the school library collection should incorporate accurate and authentic factual content from authoritative sources. Library materials should meet high standards in literacy, artistic, and aesthetic quality, including earning favorable reviews in standard reviewing sources, national or state awards from reputable organizations/sources, and/or favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel.
- APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL FORMATS: The school library collection should provide materials in high quality formats, appearance, and durability suitable to their intended uses. Paperback, board, lift-the-flap, spiral binding, activity books designed for individual use, pop-up books, and those accompanied by toys for individual use are not to be included in the school library collection.
- ADDITIONAL FORMATS: Library materials should include print and non-print materials, such as electronic and multimedia (including research databases, ebooks, audiobooks, and other forms of emerging technologies).
- ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS: Library selection/collection development must consider balancing cost with need.

(Adopted from ALA's Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries and LAUSD's Policy Bulletin 145510)

Selection Tools

The following professional reviewing sources are used to assist in selecting and evaluating ERS library materials:

- Reviews from reputable sources and professional organizations, including but not limited to School Library Journal, Booklist, Kirkus, and Horn Book.
- California Department of Education's Recommended Literature List
- Recommendations by the American Library Association, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC).

(Adopted from ALA's Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries and LAUSD's Policy Bulletin 145510)

Collection Maintenance and Weeding

It should be understood that selection is an ongoing process which will include the removal of materials no longer appropriate and the replacement of lost and worn materials still of educational value. Annually, an audit of the ERS Library's collection will be used to remove materials that are worn or damaged, outdated, or no longer relevant to the curriculum or of interest to students.

Gifts and Donations

Gifts and donations to the ERS Library are accepted with the understanding that the decision for use and disposition of the materials and/or funds will be determined using the same selection criteria as purchased materials. All materials should support the curriculum and needs of library users. Gifts and donations, like purchased resources, will be removed from the collection at the end of their useful life.

Procedures for Challenges to Library Materials

Despite the careful selection of library resources and the qualification of those involved in the selection process, objections to library resources that are deemed offensive or inappropriate may occur. Any resident, employee, or student of Tulare County may express an informal concern or formal request for reconsideration of a library resource. No request for reconsideration of school library materials will be entertained if the material has already been reviewed within the last year.

1. All complaints about ERS library print or digital resources shall be reported to the ERS Library Media Coordinator. Complaints shall be reported whether they are received by telephone, letter, or in-person conversation.
2. The Library Media Coordinator shall contact the concerned individual:

Thank you for partnering with TCOE ERS Library Services in support of advancing the love of reading and learning among our students. Your ideas, comments, and concerns (ICC) matter to us! Please use the [ERS Library Ideas, Comments & Concerns \(ICC\) form](#) as a starting place for working together.

This is an attempt to resolve the complaint informally by explaining the selection and evaluation policies and processes of TCOE ERS. When library resources are reconsidered, the principles of the freedom to read, listen, and view are discussed rather than specific materials.

3. The Library Media Coordinator will contact the requester to discuss the nature of the concern and to discuss the ERS Library selection policies, procedures and criteria.

4. If, after the informal process, the requester wishes to file a formal challenge, a copy of the “ERS Library Selection and Review Policy for School Library Materials” and a [Request for Review of Challenged School Library Materials](#)” shall be handed, mailed, or emailed to the requester by the Library Media Coordinator.
5. The “Request for Review of Challenged School Library Materials” form will be submitted to the Tulare County Office of Education.
6. All complaints will be forwarded to the ERS Library Media Coordinator.
7. Upon receipt of a complete form:
 - a. The Library Coordinator will send a letter of acknowledgment to the complainant within 10 school days.
 - b. The Library Coordinator will inform the Superintendent of Schools and other appropriate administrative personnel in writing and include a copy of the complaint.
 - c. The Superintendent of Schools shall determine whether a review committee should be convened to review the complaint.
 - d. If the Superintendent of Schools determines that a review committee is not necessary, he/she shall issue a decision regarding the complaint.
 - e. If the Superintendent of Schools determines that a review committee is necessary, he/she shall appoint a committee composed of five (5) people. Required members include an administrator, TCOE library personnel, and school-site faculty member(s). Additional members could include another administrator, another faculty member, parent, or student (as appropriate).

The committee will take the following steps:

1. All committee members will:
 - a. Receive a copy of the contested material and relevant library policy (Attachment A-C);
 - b. Read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety
 - c. Check general acceptance of the material by reading professional reviews and consulting recommended lists;
 - d. Determine the extent to which the material meets the criteria for selection set forth in the “TCOE ERS Library Media Services Selection & Evaluation Policy” (Attachment C)
 - e. Judge the material for its strengths and value as a whole and not in part.

- f. Uphold the confidential nature of this process. Only the recommendations are to be reported to the Superintendent of Schools.
 - i. The review committee must notify the superintendent in writing of the committee's recommendations within five (5) school days after the conclusion of its review in a written report.
- 2. The Superintendent will make the final determination after reviewing the committee's report.
- 3. The Superintendent or designee shall notify the complainant of the final decision within fifteen (15) days from when the final report was provided to the Superintendent.
- 4. Within fifteen (15) days from notification of the decision, the requestor May appeal the decision by writing to TCOE District Support Services. TCOE District Support Services will review based on the criteria for Selection set forth in the "Selection and Evaluation Policy" for TCOE ERS and the Appeal results will be sent to the requestor within twenty (20) business days of receipt of the appeal.
- 5. Library staff will retain or withdraw challenged materials as per the outcome of the reconsideration process.
- 6. The completed decision on reconsideration of a specific title remains in effect for three years. During the review process, the ERS library will take appropriate action to ensure that the item will continue to be available.

ATTACHMENT A

PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER AND PROGRAM

The purpose of the school library media center and program is to provide instruction and material in a variety of formats to:

- Support State and District curriculum standards and initiatives
- Support language acquisition and literacy
- Support District and school-based initiatives to close the achievement gap
- Develop independent learners who are information literate and pursue information related to personal interests
- Support personal interests and reference needs of students through self-selection of materials
- Develop a life-long love of reading and learning

- (1) Krashen, Stephen. *The Power of Reading*. Libraries Unlimited, 1993. p.23:
"Reading may be the only way to develop literacy skills."
- (2) Lance, Keith Curry, et al. *The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement*. Hi Willow Research and Publishing, 1993. p.iv
- (3) California School Library Association. *Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries*. CSLA, 2004. p.66: Standard 4
- (4) Loertscher, David. *Taxonomies of the School Library Media Program*. Libraries Unlimited, 1988. p.37
- (5) Developed by LAUSD's Instructional Media Services (now Integrated Library & Textbook Support Services) 2007

ATTACHMENT B

THE STUDENT'S RIGHT TO READ

The Right to Read

The right of any individual not just to read but to read whatever he or she wants to read is basic to a democratic society. This right is based on an assumption that the educated possess judgment and understanding and can be trusted with the determination of their own actions. In effect, the reader is freed from the bonds of chance. The reader is not limited by birth, geographic location, or time since reading allows meeting people, debating philosophies, and experiencing events far beyond the narrow confines of an individual's own existence.

The Right to Read and the Teacher of English

For many years, American schools have been pressured to restrict or deny students access to books or periodicals deemed objectionable by some individual or group on moral, political, religious, ethnic, racial, or philosophical grounds. These pressures have mounted in recent years, and English teachers have no reason to believe they will diminish. The fight against censorship is a series of continuing skirmishes, not a pitched battle leading to a final victory over censorship.

We can safely make two statements about censorship: first, any work is potentially open to attack by someone, somewhere, sometime, for some reason; second: censorship is often arbitrary or irrational.

Some groups and individuals have also raised objections to literature written specifically for young people. ...many contemporary novels for adolescents focus on the real world of young people – drugs, premarital sex, alcoholism, divorce, high school gangs, school dropouts, racism, violence, and sensuality. English teachers willing to defend the classics and modern literature must be prepared to give equally spirited defense to serious and worthwhile adolescent novels.

The Threat to Education

Censorship leaves students with an inadequate and distorted picture of the ideals, values, and problems of their culture. Writers may often represent their culture, or they may stand to the side and describe and evaluate that culture. Yet partly because of censorship or the fear of censorship, many writers are ignored or inadequately represented in the public schools...

Excerpted from National Council of Teachers of English, *The Students' Right to Read*, NCTE, 1981.

ATTACHMENT C

ERS Library Services

School Library Materials Evaluation Form

Recommend _____

Do not recommend _____

Author(s) _____

Title _____

Publisher _____ ISBN _____ Copyright Date _____

	Yes	No	N/A	Notes (Optional)
1. Does the material support and enrich the curriculum and/or students' personal interests and recreational reading? (Educational Significance)				
2. Does the material represent different perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds to foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment? (Diversity and Inclusion)				
3. Is the content appropriate for the subject area, age, ability level, learning styles, and social, emotional, and intellectual development of the students for whom the materials were intended? (Age Appropriateness)				
4. Does the material include accurate and authentically factual content from authoritative sources? (Quality and Accuracy)				
5. Does the material include any favorable reviews from standard reviewing sources, and/or earned any national or state awards? (Quality and Accuracy)				
6. Does the material support student interest and choice? (Intellectual Freedom)				

Name of evaluator: _____ Date of evaluation: _____