

## SCHOOL LIBRARY COLLECTION RENEWAL

### STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

A cornerstone of the school library is its resource collection and implementation of resource based learning. To ensure balance, reliability and comprehensiveness the development of a vibrant collection of resources must be carefully and collaboratively planned. An underlying principle of planned collection development is evaluation. In the same way that both the resources and the existing collection are evaluated before selection takes place, evaluation of the so resources and the existing collection must occur before materials are removed.

A major component of renewal is weeding. Weeding of the school library by educators results in a dynamic resource collection that is an integral part of the learning process.

- Weeding is an activity that is premised upon informed professional judgment and a carefully articulated plan.
- Weeding ensure that the school resource collection contains only those resources that are accurate, current and relevant to the learning programs of the school.
- Weeding facilitates access to quality resources.
- Weeding removes the outward illusion of a well-stocked resource collection.
- Weeding results in more effective utilization of available space and assures an up-to-date collection of resources which support learning

## INTRODUCTION

One of the duties and responsibilities of teacher-librarians as stated in the Calgary Board of Education regulations is "to assume responsibility for the quality, quantity and organization of the school library media collection." In addition, CBE Regulation 3012 states that every school will have its own "Collection Development Plan. This plan will provide for the growth and quality of the collection. Therefore, the teacher-librarian must assume professional responsibility for removing from the collection those resources which are no longer appropriate to, nor supportive of, the school program. In order to make informed, unbiased decisions regarding the removal of resources, the teacher-librarian must have expertise in and leadership of:

- a wide variety of resources
- the total school resource collection
- interests, attitudes, abilities, reading levels and learning styles of students
- programs offered in the school
- current and future curriculum developments and learning theory
- the school staff
- the community

In addition, the teacher-librarian must:

- have confidence in her/his role as a resource expert
- be decisive
- be flexible to student and staff needs
- have well-articulated plans, both short and long range, for the systematic removal of obsolete, irrelevant resources
- be able to convey to the school administration and staff the importance of weeding and the weeding plan
- utilize the expertise of the school staff to assist in the weeding process

Systematic weeding is not an irresponsible disposal of school property; rather, it is a needed service that will enhance the credibility and use of resources. 'An occasional mistake is for less serious than the cumulative effect of an outdated collection. As an expert in learning resources, the professional teacher-librarian must strive to build a collaborative climate which uses the expertise of school staff to assist in the weed process. Take courage and weed!

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### WHAT TO WEED

#### **Obvious Weeds**

##### *Worn out, dated and damaged materials*

The obvious weeds will include those which will be appropriate candidates for discard by virtue of their physical appearance.

##### *Examples:*

- Books with yellow, brittle or dirty, mutilated or missing pages; irreparably damaged binding and dirty and/or faded covers.
  
- bent, torn or otherwise damaged study prints or posters

If the condition is poor, the item should be weeded and consideration given to replacement.

##### *Revised Editions*

When a revised edition of a title is added to the collection, the previous outdated edition should be discarded.

##### *Duplicates*

Where there are duplicates and none seems to be circulating or used, all unnecessary duplicates should be discarded. At a later date, the single copy should be reconsidered for weeding. In fact, in particular situations (e.g., where all volumes are dated) a judgment should be made as to whether all copies should be discarded.

Resources which do not conform with copyright legislation

[http://www.teachers.ab.ca/publications/news/volume\\_30/number\\_12/cancopy.html](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/publications/news/volume_30/number_12/cancopy.html)

##### *Examples:*

- videos without public performance rights
- pirated software
- photocopied print material

### **Thoughtful Weeds**

These decisions will acknowledge professional analysis and expertise of the teacher-librarian. When decisions are being made, consider all formats of resources: books, multimedia, picture, vertical files, and online resources.

The overall quality and value of the title must be considered and balanced using the CBE Evaluation/Selection Form

Examples of thoughtful weeds include the following:

Resources containing information not easily accessible

- no table of contents
- no index
- content poorly organized
- back issues of periodicals which are not indexed
- Resources that contain outdated, inaccurate content
- Resources for which format or reading level is inappropriate to the reading and/or interest level of the students
  - Dated resources which are not metric
  - Resources which are regularly superseded, such as almanacs and yearbooks
- Audiovisual formats where equipment no longer supports usage, e.g. filmstrips
- Resources that do not model, encourage or reinforce actions or beliefs which indicate a prejudice or disrespect of an individual or group action.

### **WHAT NOT TO WEED**

Some resources should not be discarded. Consider these for retention:

The "classics" and award winners (replace as needed)

- Items which appear on standard, current core bibliographies
- Resources of local interest; local histories
- Resources unique in content, format, illustrative technique, etc.
- Poorly bound quality resources which are suitable for rebinding which are suitable for rebinding [www.albertabookbindery.com](http://www.albertabookbindery.com)

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN WEEDING**

Some areas of the collection become dated and require examination more-frequently than others. It is suggested that all resources that have been in the collection 5 years or more be evaluated for accuracy, availability and usefulness. However, each title must be considered individually

before removal. Consult the Core Resources for Collection Development and the Evaluation database.

While circulation statistics and curriculum fit may be indicators of need, they should not be sole indicators for removal. Many resources are used in the school library without being signed out. Also, students and teachers may be unaware of valuable titles, with the result that the titles do not circulate. Accurate up-to-date resources may not have current

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curriculum relevance, but since curricula are subject to change, the resources may be useful in the future. The following guidelines are helpful when weeding specific areas of the collection.

### **Dewey Classification:**

- 000* Works on computers will date quickly. Bibliographies are of questionable use after 5 years from date of copyright.
- 100* Consider weeding descriptions of philosophical and psychological problems no longer of interest, and out-of-date psychologies.
- 200* Retain basic information about as many sects and religions as possible.
- 300* Retain balance on controversial issues.  
Discard outdated social issues which are not of historical value.  
Keep law and government sections current. Consider weeding career materials over five years old. Keep standard works on customs and folklore.
- 400* Discard old dictionaries.
- 500* Examine closely anything over five years old, except for botany and natural history. Discard resources with obsolete information and theories.
- 600* Examine closely resources over three years old dealing with drugs, space technology, sex education, communications technology and medicine.
- 700* Keep basic works in music and art. Replace with new editions and works with better illustrations.  
Avoid dated works on photography techniques and equipment.  
Keep well-illustrated resources on crafts.
- 800* Keep literary criticism and history until superseded by more authoritative works.  
Retain titles indexed in standard reference indexes.

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900	Weed superseded histories and outdated geography and atlases Retain histories pertaining to the school, community and city. Weed travel information after three years unless of historical value.
Biography	Keep those outstanding in content and style and interest.
Fiction/ Picture Books	Keep high demand titles and those with literary merit. Replace classics as new, more attractive editions are available.
Encyclopedias (Print or Electronic)	New print editions should be purchases every three to five years to supersede old editions. Schools should have access to current online references.
Almanacs/ Yearbooks	Superseded by each new volume. Keep back issues for teaching purposes if deemed appropriate
Indexes	As new annuals or cumulating appear, discard as appropriate.
Periodicals/ Newspapers	Keep indexed titles, taking into consideration shelving and storage space.
Vertical File	Keep only information not found in other sources, if deemed necessary. Online resources may make this section obsolete.
Professional Library	Keep titles which reflect current educational theory and practice, as well as standard works.

## PROCEDURES

The process of weeding school library collections depends upon the plan which is formulated by the teacher-librarian, and then is carried out by that teacher-librarian and any other certificated staff in the school. The execution of the plan will vary from school to school and individual to individual, but it should not be a "hit and miss proposition." Instead, a systematic approach to this activity will alleviate many of the anxieties or frustrations, which schools feel they will experience.

### When to weed?

The time to weed can best be determined by the teacher-librarian in the school. Certainly it should be done based upon recognized needs identified by the teacher-librarian after a **Needs Analysis**. Often, weeding is related to the inventory of the collection, since this is one opportunity where consideration is given to the library resources. Like inventory, weeding should occur at a time when the school program will be least interrupted. Only the teacher-librarian who knows the school program and the collection can make that judgment. Caution should be exercised when weeding in the first year of tenure in the school library

**Weeding is done:**

- *Continuously* - This involves constant weeding on a day-to-day basis as resources are carded and shelved. The library assistant should set aside possible repairs, discards or rebinds for the teacher-library's consideration.
- *Intermittently* throughout the school year
- May be done in conjunction with a "rolling inventory" or year-end inventory.
- Specific sections of the collection are identified as requiring weeding. Weeding is done by the teacher-librarian and a record is kept of areas which have been weeded. Teaching staff is encouraged to assist.
- *Periodically*, a part of, or an entire professional day can be allocated to weeding the school library collection. This helps build a climate of cooperation and ownership for renewal of the school library collection.
- Initial identification of weeds involves the teaching staff.
- Teacher-librarian organizes the activity and makes final decisions regarding discards.

**WEEDING FOLLOW-UP**

Once resources have been identified as "weeds" which need to be discarded, the teacher-librarian and library support staff have responsibilities regarding the removal of the items from the school. Weeded materials are generally of two types.

There are those "weeds" which are of no use to your school or any other school within the District. These discards clearly do not meet any of the selection criteria listed in this document and would likely not support any programs within Calgary schools, either presently or in the future. These discards are to be physically disposed of:

- At the school level with the appropriate steps to ensure that a complete disposal of the resources at that site, refer to Disposal of Curriculum Resources in Library Management.

2) The weeds must be physically and electronically removed from the collection. ***Use caution before donating materials to classroom resources*** which are not appropriate for the school library are not appropriate for the classroom.

Please ensure that the following steps are addressed for discarded titles:

- Remove barcode and/or pocket the item.  
Stamp or mark in a prominent place on the item, "Officially removed from the Calgary Board of Education."

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- If a shelf-list exists, remove cards.
  - Delete item from online catalogue
  - Consider what has been removed and note any resulting priorities for future purchase in the **Needs Analysis for Collection Development**.
  - Schools cannot legally dispose of items, which were bought Sales Tax exempt for **at least, THREE YEARS from date of purchase**.
- 1) Another type of weeded resources include resources of possible use in other school resource libraries within the District. These materials would include:
- Duplicates of currently valuable titles
  - Resources for which format or reading level is no longer appropriate to the reading and/or; interest level of the students in your school.

It is the teacher-librarian's responsibility to arrange at the school for appropriate relocation either through redistribution to feeder schools or to other schools in the district.

### CONCLUSION

**It must be emphasized that the ongoing renewal of the school library collection is an essential part of the teacher-librarian's responsibility in the school. The school collection supports and enriches student learning by providing an abundance of current and relevant materials in a variety of formats.**