

Library Policies and Procedures



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[Introduction](#)

This handbook is designed to aid Library Media Specialists (LMS), administrators, faculty, and staff on the policies and procedures of the Cassville R-IV School District Library Media Centers (LMC).

Policies and procedures have been approved by the school board and have been written with guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) standards and American Library Association (ALA) standards.

Mission Statement

The Cassville R-IV School District's mission statement is to: Embrace knowledge, respect tradition, and foster community. The library media centers in this district enhance this mission by providing materials, services and skills.

Philosophy

The Cassville Library Media Centers will be an integral part of the total educational program and will meet the needs of each student. This program will help students to become lifelong learners, acquirers of knowledge, and responsible citizens through accomplishing the goals of the Cassville R-IV School District.

Department Rationale

The purpose of the media center is to develop comprehensive information systems that meet the needs of faculty members and students of differing abilities, backgrounds, and interests. Media programs contribute at every level, offering essential processes, functions, and resources to accomplish the purpose of the school district.

Cassville School District Vision Statement

Graduation for every student

Success for every graduate

Graduation Goals

- Students will recognize libraries as an integral part of the education system and as a lifelong learning resource.
- Students will become discriminating readers in school, as well as in leisure time activities.
- Students will develop a logical sense of where to search for reference materials and information of personal interest.
- Students will become familiar with fact-finding sources.
- Students will become technologically literate and responsible users of technology

Cassville R-IV School District

Library Media Center Staff

Building	Library Media Specialist
High School	Briana Kleine
Middle School	Becky Haynes
Intermediate School	Misty Truman
Primary School	Savannah Essary

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Roles and Responsibilities of the School Library Media Specialist

As teacher, the library media specialist collaborates with the student and other members of the learning community to analyze learning and information needs, to locate and use resources that will meet those needs, and to understand and communicate the information the resources provide. An effective instructor of students, the library media specialist is knowledgeable about current research on teaching and learning and skilled in applying its findings to a variety of situations--particularly those that call upon students to access, evaluate, and use information from multiple sources in order to learn, to think, and to create and apply new knowledge. A curricular leader and a full participant on the instructional team, the library media specialist constantly updates personal skills and knowledge in order to work effectively with teachers, administrators, and other staff--both to expand their general understanding of information issues and to provide them with specific opportunities to develop sophisticated skills in information literacy, including the uses of information technology.

As instructional partner, the library media specialist joins with teachers and others to identify links across student information needs, curricular content, learning outcomes, and a wide variety of print, nonprint, and electronic information resources. Working with the entire school community, the library media specialist takes a leading role in developing policies, practices, and curricula that guide students to develop the full range of information and communication abilities. Committed to the process of collaboration, the library media specialist works closely with individual teachers in the

critical areas of designing authentic learning tasks and assessments and integrating the information and communication abilities required to meet subject matter standards.

As information specialist, the library media specialist provides leadership and expertise in acquiring and evaluating information resources in all formats; in bringing an awareness of information issues into collaborative relationships with teachers, administrators, students, and others; and in modeling for students and others strategies for locating, accessing, and evaluating information within and beyond the library media center. Working in an environment that has been profoundly affected by technology, the library media specialist both masters sophisticated electronic resources and maintains a constant focus on the nature, quality, and ethical use of information available in these and in more traditional tools.

As **program administrator**, the library media specialist works collaboratively with members of the learning community to define the policies of the library media program and to guide and direct all activities related to it. Confident of the importance of the effective use of information and information technology to students' personal and economic success in their future lives, the library media specialist is an advocate for the library media program and provides the knowledge, vision, and leadership to steer it creatively and energetically in the twenty-first century. Proficient in the management of staff, budgets, equipment, and facilities, the library media specialist plans, executes, and evaluates the program to ensure its quality both at a general level and on a day-to-day basis.

Excerpted from chapter 1, "The Vision," Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning (American Library Association, 1998)

Goals & Objectives of the School Library Media Center

The goal areas and objectives for Library Media skills are derived from *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*(American Library Association, 1998).

- The student will demonstrate the ability to locate, retrieve, and handle media and equipment.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to select and evaluate media.
- The student will organize, manage and comprehend information.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to use information effectively and creatively.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to appreciate media as sources of information and recreation.

The LMC Goals also meet the Cassville School District CSIP Goals.

Strategy 1: We will develop and implement plans to challenge Cassville students to personalize their educational experience.

Action Plan 3: Provide flexible learning opportunities to help students meet their educational goals.

Strategy 2: We will develop and implement learning opportunities that include traditional and progressive learning experiences.

Action Plan 3: We will develop and implement additional academic support systems.

Strategy 3: We will develop and implement plans to enhance curriculum in the areas of literacy and numeracy, pathways for success, and blended learning.

Action Plan 1: Establish continuity in reading and numeracy intervention PK-12

Action Plan 2: Explore multiple pathways for student success

Action Plan 3: Explore options for traditional and progressive learning opportunities

Strategy 4: We will develop and implement plans to provide all students the opportunity to develop skills based on their interests for future endeavors through instructional practices throughout their educational experience.

Action Plan 1: Engage in developmentally appropriate character education programs PK-12

Action Plan 2: Utilize Missouri Connections to help students identify the appropriate educational pathway

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Selection Policy

In accordance with the Cassville R-IV School Board Policy, "...instructional materials shall be chosen for values of educational interest and the enlightenment off all students...and shall not be excluded on the basis of the writer's racial, nationalistic, political, or religious views."

The responsibility for the selection of library materials is delegated to the certificated media personnel and is based on these objectives:

1. *To provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the pupils served.*

2. *To provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.*
3. *Provide background information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.*
4. *To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical reading and thinking.*
5. *Provide materials representative of the contributions to our American heritage from the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups.*
6. *Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.*
7. *Use existing special criteria for the selection of all kinds of materials, such as films, CDs, tapes and books, for all subject areas. The general criteria that may be applied to all acquisitions are as follows:*

∅ Material should have permanent or timely values

∅ Information should be accurate.

∅ Material should be presented in a clear manner.

∅ Material should be authoritative.

∅ Material should have significance.

Collection Maintenance Policy

The Cassville School Library Media Centers will attempt to provide an appropriate collection of books, materials, and equipment in accordance with the selection policy. Cassville School personnel and students will have input into the purchasing of the collection (see survey pages in the appendix).

Cleaning and repair of materials will be performed as needed and replacement will be made if materials are valuable and become damaged beyond repair.

Library materials will be reconsidered and, if necessary, removed from district media centers and libraries in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. *The material is outdated or factually incorrect.*
2. *A more thorough or more complete resource exists.*
3. *The resource no longer supports the district's curriculum objectives.*
4. *The resource is not used by either staff or students.*
5. *The resource is not recommended by district librarians, teachers or administration.*

Obsolete materials will be offered to teachers and staff members for personal use as reference material. After a reasonable amount of time, the resources will then be offered to students and citizens. Equipment will be sold at a public auction.

Reconsideration of Materials Policy

The Cassville R-IV School District Board of Education has the ultimate responsibility for establishing the curriculum and for purchasing instructional, media and library materials to be used by the district. However, the Board recognizes that its authority to remove or censor materials because of ideological or religious content may be limited pursuant to state and federal law.

The Board encourages community input and comments regarding the district's instructional media and library materials and directs the district staff to answer all questions regarding the selections of the materials. Library Media Specialists will follow the procedures outlined in board policy KLB-AP Critical when complaints about library materials are received.

(Ref: Board Policy File IIAC-R Critical: Instructional Media Centers/School Libraries & KLB-AP Critical)

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Donation and Gift Policy

The Cassville School District welcomes gifts of books, periodical subscriptions, works of art, media, other educational materials, equipment, and money donations. However, these gifts must meet the standards set by the selection policy of the district. Gifts are irrevocable; those not added to or deleted from the collection may be disposed of as the Library Media Specialist deems appropriate.

Under no circumstances does the librarian or any other school district personnel appraise gifts. A dated inventory of the gift(s) signed by the Library Media Specialist will be provided if requested by the donor.

Certified school personnel will decide the appropriate use, housing, and maintenance of the donated materials. Book plates or dedication labels will be placed in the books or on the materials to identify the donor, unless the donor prefers anonymity.

(Ref: Board Policy File KH Critical: Public Gifts to the Schools)

Right to Access Policy

School Library Media Specialists assume a leadership role in promoting intellectual freedom. The LMC serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas as students

acquire critical thinking and problem solving skills. Librarians also collaborate with teachers to integrate instructional activities with these skills and to teach students to use a range of resources effectively.

Media specialists and teachers should not limit resources based on the student's age, or their personal, religious, political or social views. They should work together to build collections that are appropriate for the developmental and maturity levels of the students. Students shall have access to materials that represent diverse points of view and current, as well as, historic issues. School library media professionals resist efforts by individuals or groups to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view or hear.

The School Library Media Program supports the principles contained in the "Code of Ethics of the American Library Association", the "Library Bill of Rights" and the "Freedom to Read Statement". These guiding documents can be found in the appendix of this handbook.

Confidentiality Policy

The Library Media Specialist will uphold the school board policy. Individually identifiable library records will be confidential and considered an education record under federal law. No records will be released unless reasons meet the board policy and confidentiality law.

Records may be released:

1. In response to a written request of the person identified in that record, according to procedures and forms giving written consent as determined by the library; or
2. In response to an order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction upon a finding that the disclosure of such a record is necessary to protect the public safety or to prosecute a crime.

(Ref: Board Policy File IIAC-Critical: Instructional Media Centers/School Libraries)

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Copyright Policy

The purpose of a copyright policy is to clarify the law for employees, inform staff members of their responsibilities, provide protection, and provide a reference source when employees have questions. Therefore the following information is included to assist staff in understanding the copyright law.

Copyright Law

Definition:

Copyright is a limited monopoly granted by federal law. It is the exclusive right that protects an author, composer, or programmer from having his or her work duplicated except by permission.

Purpose:

The purpose of copyright is to encourage the development of new and original works and to stimulate their wide distribution by assuring that their creators will be fairly compensated for their contributions to society.

Length and Ownership:

Copyright lasts for the life of the author plus seventy (70) years. Mere ownership of a book, manuscript, video, etc., *does not* give the possessor the copyright. That is only ownership of a *copy* of the work. Only the author or his designees can rightfully claim copyright.

Works Included:

Works of authorship include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

Computer programs

Dramatic works, including any accompanying music

Literary works

Motion pictures and other audiovisual works

Pantomimes and choreographic works

Pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works

Sound recordings

Date of Law and Congressional Guidelines:

The current American copyright law is embodied in Title 17 of the United States Code.

Doctrine of Fair Use

"Fair use" is the legal right to copy a limited amount of material under certain conditions without harm to the owner. Such copying is allowable without obtaining permission from the copyright owner.

The new copyright law stipulates that photocopying and other kinds of duplication and reproduction must abide by the criteria of "fair use." The fair use criteria must be applied to determine if intended copying is "fair."

The four criteria of fair use specified by Section 107 of Title 17, are listed as follows:

The *purpose* and character of the use. (Copying for commercial purposes or for profit is not allowed.)

The *nature* of the copyrighted work. (Consumable items may not be copied. Works, which require royalty, may not be copied. Reproduction of musical compositions, dramas, and audiovisual works is not authorized.)

The *amount and substantiality* of the portion being copied. (Unreasonable amounts or excessive quantities are not allowed.)

The *effect* on the potential market and on the value of the work. (If copying is done to avoid purchase or if copying will adversely affect the sale of the item, it is not allowed.)

All four of these criteria need to be applied in judging whether or not there may be an infringement. Meeting only one of the criteria is not enough. The copying must reflect appropriate use of *all four* criteria. In other words, if a teacher reproduces some material for an “educational purpose” (criterion #1), this does not constitute fair use unless the other three criteria (nature, amount and effect) are also met.

Guidelines and Restrictions for Use of Copyrighted Materials

General Guidelines:

There are a few guidelines that apply to all types of materials. The fair use doctrine should always be followed when determining whether or not to copy any material.

Allowed

In general, when copying portions of a work, 10% is a reasonable guide for copying. It is also easier to calculate.

All works copyrighted before 1925 are in the public domain and may be copied without applying copyright guidelines.

Nearly all government documents may be copied in unlimited quantity, unless they are copyrighted. Be sure to check.

News, both print and non-print, may not be copyrighted. It may always be copied. Be sure it is news. The format of the news may be copyrighted, however.

Not Allowed

Copies may never be made to avoid purchase.

Illegal copying should not be done on direction from a higher authority teacher, supervisor, principal, etc.

Copies should never be made without inclusion of the copyright symbol or notice, which appears on the work.

Copies may never be made from consumable materials (workbooks, standardized tests, answer sheets, etc.), unless express permission is granted in print on the material.

Students may not be charged for more than the actual cost of authorized copies.

Detailed information concerning copyright can be found online at <http://www.copyright.gov/> .

The Library Media Specialist, LMS, will uphold and inform others to the best of his/her ability of the copyright laws as set forth by United States Code Title 17, Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 (H.R. 2281), Copyright Term Extension Act (S. 505) and the philosophy of the school district set by the Board as follows:

The Board does not sanction illegal duplication in any form. Employees who willfully disregard the district's copyright position are in violation of Board policy; they do so at their own risk and assume all liability responsibility.

Copyrighted materials, whether they are print or non-print, will not be duplicated unless such reproduction meets "fair use" standards, or unless written permission from the copyright holder has been received.

(Ref: Board Policy File EGAAA-Critical: Reproduction of Copyrighted Materials)

(Ref: Board Policy File EGAAA-AP Critical: Reproduction of Copyrighted Materials: Usage Guidelines)

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Technology Usage Policy

The Library Media Specialists strive to follow the guidelines set forth in the Cassville R-IV School District Technology Policy, and encourage technology users in the district to comply. The Cassville R-IV School recognizes the educational and professional value of electronics-based information technology, both as a means of access to enriching information and as a tool to develop skills that students need.

All users, both students and faculty, must sign a technology usage policy before using any of the district's technology equipment. Anyone who does not comply with the policy will lose computer usage privileges.

(Ref: Board Policy File EHB Critical: Technology Usage)

(Ref: Board Policy File EHB AP(1)ritical: Technology Usage: Technology Safety)

(Ref: Board Policy File EHB-AP(2) Techonolgy Usage: Access to Blocked or Filtered Content)

Evaluation of the Library Media Program

The library media center must meet the instructional needs of its users to be an effective and integral part of the school. Evaluations by both users and the library media specialist should be

utilized to identify strengths and weaknesses in the program and provide goals for continuous improvement.

Ongoing assessment of the collection and services provide valuable information that should be used to help determine the level of effectiveness of the LMC, determine if sufficient quantity and quality of resources are available and help establish priorities that result in sufficient funds for resources.

It is the responsibility of the Library Media Specialist to evaluate the collection holdings on a regular basis to determine if they meet the instructional needs of the users. When evaluating the collection, the LMS needs to consider not only quantity and quality of the holdings but whether the collection is aligned with the school curriculum, the integration of formats, and the needs of both students and teachers. The 1997 *Standards for Missouri School Library Media Centers* contains a planning and evaluation worksheet which is to be completed each year. The LMS must also survey the staff and the students grades 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 each year. Using the information from both the planning and evaluation worksheet and the surveys, the LMS should identify strengths and weaknesses in the collection and the overall program and use this information to define and prioritize goals for the program.

The Library Media Specialist must work cooperatively with the district administration to develop a building collection plan that contains a specific plan of action that identifies the method that will be used to improve prioritized areas. The plan should contain two or more strategies that will be implemented between the time the need was identified and the next MSIP review. The cost of the plan should be in addition to the annual budget not taken from the district's annual commitment. The plan is to be reviewed/rewritten each year and is a demonstration of the district's progress to improve the library media centers.

The plan is to be maintained in the library media center and to be readily available for MSIP reviews.

In addition, the Library Media Specialist will be evaluated each year by the building principal.

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Appendix

Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

Library Bill of Rights

Freedom to Read Statement

Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs. Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations. The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
4. We recognize and respect intellectual property rights.
5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
8. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

Adopted by the ALA Council
June 28, 1995

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.
Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980,
inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996,
by the ALA Council.

The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the

United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The

people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers. Adopted June 25, 1953; revised January 28, 1972, January 16, 1991, July 12, 2000, June 30, 2004, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee

