

MATERIAL SELECTION POLICY

Mission Statement

The mission of the Belleville Public Library is to provide the community with user-friendly access to a broad spectrum of resources supporting cultural needs and life-long learning. The Library also seeks to preserve the historical heritage of its citizens and fulfills its mission by assembling, preserving and administering organized materials in all appropriate formats.

Strategic Plan

To further its mission the library emphasizes the following service responses:

- Current topics and titles
- Local history and genealogy
- Lifelong learning
- Formal learning support for K-8

The Library maintains broadly representative and current collections of materials in a variety of formats on all subjects of general interest to the community in fulfillment of its mission, and within these stated service responses. All materials are selected for the breadth and depth of content and the diversity of viewpoint that they will add to the library collection. For library users interested in more intensive treatments or in topics of very specialized interest, the Library draws upon the wider resources of local, regional, state and national interlibrary cooperative systems.

Responsibility for Material Selection and Collection Management

The Library Director operating within this framework of policies determined by the Board of Library Trustees has overall responsibility for collection development. Typically, the Library Director delegates or shares this responsibility with designated members of the staff. However, all members of the staff, board, and citizenry may recommend titles for consideration, and such recommendations are encouraged.

The Library will attempt to borrow through interlibrary loan any requested item which is out of print, or that the Library determines does not meet the criteria for purchase.

Statement on Access

The Board of Library Trustees of the Belleville Public Library endorses and adopts as library policy and procedure the following documents as published by the American Library Association:

Statement on Access--continued

The Freedom to Read Statement
The Freedom to View Statement
The Library Bill of Rights
The Code of Professional Ethics

The Board of Library Trustees has incorporated these four documents into the Library Policy Manual. These documents can be found on pages 3 through 10 in the Policy Manual or on the Library's website at [www.librarytrustees.org](#)

All of the above documents are also contained in the current edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual and addendums are published by the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association. They are available on the American Library Association's website at [www.ala.org/ifm](#)

It is the Library's responsibility to provide its users with a diversity of information and opinion, thus allowing all library users to exercise their own judgment in the selection of materials for themselves and their children.

The library supports the right and responsibility of parents and guardians to supervise their children's use of the library and its resources. The final decision on any child's access to library materials in every instance is the prerogative of that child's parent or guardian. If a parent feels that certain library materials are inappropriate for the child, it is the parent's right and responsibility to withhold those materials from that child. The library staff cannot perform this duty for parents. The library staff can and will assist parents in locating materials in the library collection that the parents consider appropriate for their children.

The library staff encourages users to share their reactions both positive and negative, to library materials with the staff through verbal or written comments and discussion. Such input is invaluable to the development of a useful and dynamic library connection. In this way the library best fulfills its mission to serve the entire community.

Requests for Reconsideration

The Board of Library Trustees has adopted a separate policy for the reconsideration of materials. Please refer to that section of the policy manual.

General Collection Policies

Criteria for Selection

All materials, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following standards. An item need not meet all criteria in order to be added to the collection. Items will be evaluated on the significance of the entire work rather than on isolated passages. The general criteria in selecting materials include:

- Accuracy of content
- Literary merit
- Qualifications, reputation, authority of author, editor or producer
- Currency or timeliness
- Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
- Quality of format and ease of use
- Price and availability
- Value and relationship to existing collection and to other materials on the subject
- Scarcity of information in the subject area
- Community interest and demand
- Attention of critics, reviewers, media and public
- Technical quality of non-book materials
- Ease of use of electronic formats
- Accessibility to multiple users of electronic formats

Other factors that have a direct impact upon material selection are budgetary and space restrictions, adequacy and availability of materials through other community institutions, and the function of each specific library branch.

Special Collections

Archives

The Library maintains a circulating collection of books on the basics of genealogical research which are of value to the general public. The non-circulating collection is more extensive and consists primarily of indexes, bibliographies, and verification tools, and listings of sources for vital records in particular states and foreign countries relevant to local immigration patterns. Illinois and local histories of significance are purchased as well as biographies of prominent Illinoisans. Microfilm of the U.S. Census records as well as books, newspapers and other special materials for the immediate geographic area are purchased as they become available. The Founders collection consists of the volumes that remain from the original 1836 collection of the German Library Society which operated as subscription library from their combined private collections. In 1863 the Society donated their collection to the City for the purpose of founding a public library. This collection is preserved in acid-free boxes and is stored in the vault.

Special Collections—continued

Saint Louis Art Museum Resources

The Library serves as a Saint Louis Art Museum Satellite Resource Center and houses a collection of instructional materials acquired and developed by the Saint Louis Art Museum Resource Center. The collection, initially funded by a grant from the Belleville News-Democrat, includes a variety of materials including realia, posters, reproductions, teaching guides and lesson plans. The Library makes these visual, cultural and education resources available to area students, teachers and others served by the Belleville News-Democrat.

Materials for Adults

The materials are selected to serve the needs of adults and high school students including reference circulation and non-fiction books, fiction and various other formats.

Materials for Children and Young Adults

The children's collection generally serves children through grade seven. Collected materials include classic and contemporary picture books for preschoolers, beginning readers, junior fiction and non-fiction books, periodicals, a wide variety of non-book materials including audio and video titles, computer software, instructional toys and realia. Also connected are materials on parenting, teaching and homeschooling materials. Emphasis is placed on choosing materials that encourage reading skills, stimulate imagination and curiosity, offer entertainment and give children information about the world they live in.

The Young Adult Collection serves youth from grade 8 and up and serves as a bridge between the children's and adult collections. Materials are selected to meet the interests and issues specific to this age group.

Fiction and non-fiction materials for both collections are chosen to complement school curricula and support homework needs for elementary, junior and senior high school students. School reading lists and "Best Books" lists prepared by professional and educational organizations play a strong role in selecting materials for these collections.

Languages

The Library collects materials predominately in the English language. The Fiction Collection includes Fiction in Translation (materials written and published in another language that have been translated into English for American readers.) Materials in foreign languages are reconsidered as community needs change. Individual needs for foreign languages not purchased by the library may be served by interlibrary loan requests.

Languages—continued

The Library maintains a basis collection of foreign language dictionaries and self-instruction materials in a variety of formats.

Intensity of Treatment

The Library collects both popular and technical treatments of subjects, and some research-oriented materials. "Research" in this context means materials written for the well-educated or experienced layperson, not the specialist or the scholar. The Belleville Public Library is not designed to provide research facilities for higher education.

Multiple Copies

The Library will purchase or supply through rental (or rented) books to meet the demand for heavily demanded books.

Reference Works

The Main Library will provide a reference collection at an intermediate level. The West Branch Library will maintain minimal reference materials.

Textbooks

The Library tries to serve student's needs as much as possible; however textbooks are not purchased unless they are the best source of information on a given subject. The Library policy is to purchase materials which will supplement and complement the curriculum offerings of the public and private schools within the Library service area.

Gifts and Exchanges

The Library gratefully accepts gifts of materials in all formats currently collected by the Library with the understanding that any gift material added to the library collection must meet the same standards of selection that are applied to library purchases.

When the Library receives a cash gift or donation for the purchase of materials, whether as a memorial or for any other purpose, the library will honor the wishes of the

donor as to the general nature, format or subject matter of the materials to be purchased. However, the selection of specific materials must be made by the director and designated staff in accordance with the needs of the collection and the standard selection criteria.

Gifts, memorials and other donations cannot be shelved as separate physical entities. Such separate shelving makes access to the materials more difficult for library users. Gift material will be shelved in the appropriate areas of the general collection. A gift bookplate attached to the material will identify the donor or the person memorialized by the donation, according to the preference of the donor.

The Library may also engage in exchange programs with other area libraries, offering surplus items or items that do not fit the Library's collection parameters to other libraries and accepting such material when offered by other libraries.

Withdrawal of materials

The Belleville Public Library is not a library of historical record except in the area of local history and genealogy. Materials that have outlived their usefulness are withdrawn from the collection to insure a vital and current collection of materials of continuing value to the community. Criteria for withdrawal include:

- The item has become physically worn and unattractive
- The information is out-of-date and no longer accurate
- The subject treated is out-of-date and no longer current or relevant to the community
- Lack of use
- Newer items on the same subject have superseded the item and made it surplus to the needs of the collection.

Materials withdrawn from the collection will be sold by the library at its books sales. Individual items being withdrawn may not be saved for specific individuals.

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