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“With knowledge, tact, skill, and preparation, you can ensure that politics and intellectual freedom remain on friendly terms.”

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One of my favorite reads as a young person was a book I found buried on my mom’s bookshelf. It was an old paperback, pages falling out, paper yellowed and brittle. I didn’t ask my mom to borrow the book, but she wouldn’t have expected me to. I just began reading it, and it became a ground-breaking read for my youthful self. Shortly after I began the book my mom noticed me reading it and told me a story. When she was young this book had been banned in her high school. Originally, it had been published for adults, but with a teen main character troubled and searching for identity, it quickly was adopted by the younger generation. The copy that I was reading, the actual copy in my hands, was hidden in the girls’ bathroom, and the girls would take bathroom breaks throughout the day to sneak in and read the book.

Today this book is considered a classic and sometimes even included on required reading lists. What would the world be like for me if my mom or my community had made the decision to restrict me intellectually? What if they made all my reading choices for me? It would have completely altered who I am, my love of reading, and my thirst for knowledge.

I admit it: I love being a school librarian. We get to bring so much joy and comfort to our patrons.

The Importance of Intellectual Freedom Today

I admit it: I love being a school librarian. We get to bring so much joy and comfort to our patrons. We are instrumental in developing students’ abilities to become independent and autonomous thinkers, learners, and doers. Intellectual freedom is a multi-faceted issue. The American Library Association defines intellectual freedom as “the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction” (n.d.). A school library is a conduit to equitable access to information. It does not matter the race, creed, color, social strata, or country of birth. When our students enter their school library and work with their school librarian, they are all equal in the eyes of equitable access to information and intellectual freedom.

The speed at which information is available and is propagated is overwhelming to the average information consumer. The information available may be accurate, biased, distorted, valid, informative, entertaining—or sometimes even a combination of all of the above. Our great hope is to develop literate citizens who have access to all the information, yet can assess and interpret this information. Developing these skills is a critical role for school librarians.

It is our responsibility to teach students and teachers to access all types of information and to evaluate for the accuracy found within. When intellectual...
As you advocate for the information and learning freedoms and needs of others, advocate for yourself; attend the AASL 17th National Conference & Exhibition.

freedom is jeopardized, when information or resources are withheld, so is a person’s ability to learn and make thorough decisions. The school is one of the great strengths of a community, and a school librarian is the cornerstone for developing the most well-rounded, literate citizens in a democratic society. We want to grow people who are capable of learning for themselves, thinking for themselves, and communicating their expertise in an effective and productive manner. This is made possible through a valued school library program, collection, library, and librarian who teaches and upholds these concepts.

The demand for and belief in freedoms is a pillar in our country. Intellectual freedom and the expectation of free and equitable access to information through library resources, training, and materials are the most important freedoms and are the backbone of our ability to be independent thinkers and creators of ideas, evidence, and innovations.

AASL 17th National Conference
Developing powerfully literate citizens requires time to reflect on the myriad issues that are impacting school libraries and schools today. You deserve the chance to rejuvenate your soul and recharge your professional practice through the greatest professional development opportunity for school librarians, the AASL 17th National Conference & Exhibition held in America’s heartland in Columbus, Ohio.

The conference includes over 100 general sessions, a best-practice showcase (IdeaLab), an exhibition hall with a makerspace, preconference workshops, school and educational tours, authors, and networking opportunities. Cutting-edge learning will focus on intellectual freedom, STEM/STEAM, Common Core, inquiry learning, digital tools and learning, and so much more.

In addition, some of the greatest vendors of library resources and materials will be at this conference. It also provides multiple opportunities to network with other professionals and learn what others are doing around the country to solve problems, encourage intellectual freedom, inspire learning, develop programming, promote reading, and help students become the best people possible.

Bring an administrator along with you—they receive complimentary registration with a school librarian. Allow your administrator to engage in the programming and discussions that are powerfully meaningful to a school administrator of the twenty-first century.

As Deb Logan and Kathy Lowe, conference co-chairs, said, “Be the connection between evolution and revolution. We are not passive in this changing system. We are advocates for students, teachers, and learning.” As you advocate for the information and learning freedoms and needs of others, advocate for yourself; attend the AASL 17th National Conference & Exhibition.

See you there!

Leslie Preddy has been the school librarian at Perry Meridian Middle School in Indianapolis, Indiana, since 1992, and has served as an adjunct professor for Indiana University, Indiana State University, and IUPUI. She has presented webinars for edWeb, the Indiana Department of Education, and the American Library Association. She is a frequent speaker and consultant at local, state, national, and international education conferences and events. Leslie is a past recipient of AASL’s Collaborative School Library Media Award and School Library Media Program of the Year Award and ALA’s Sara Jaffarian School Library Program Award for Exemplary Humanities Programming. She is the president of AASL and is a past president for the Association of Indiana School Library Educators. Her books include SSR with Intervention: A School Library Action Research Project and Social Readers: Promoting Reading in the 21st Century. Her latest book is School Library Makerspaces.

Work Cited:
School librarians have a lot to manage. They are fending off or coping with budget cuts, demonstrating the value of their positions, following debates about the Common Core and testing, and often working in multiple schools, frequently as the only school librarian in the district. Many are working with an increasing number of students living in poverty, more English language learners, and students on both sides of a persistent digital divide.

In spite of the shifting K–12 education landscape and changes in school libraries, however, minors’ First Amendment rights and the library profession’s intellectual freedom principles remain unchanged. That’s why we have chosen “Intellectual Freedom—Enduring Values in a Changing World” as the theme for this issue. Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to seek and receive information from various points of view. It is a core value of our profession.

Knowledge Quest has published two intellectual freedom-themed issues in the past: “Intellectual Freedom 101” in November/December 2007 and “Intellectual Freedom Online” in September/October 2010. School librarians continue to grapple with the major intellectual freedom concerns: challenges to school library resources of all kinds, restrictive filtering of websites, questions about labeling and rating systems, maintaining confidentiality of students’ library records, and ensuring equity of access by students to resources and technology.

This Knowledge Quest issue addresses all of these topics and more, with articles that discuss the enduring principles of intellectual freedom and explain how those principles play out in real-life situations. The articles are presented in three clusters.

First, you’ll read about how to create a culture of intellectual freedom based on the legal framework of minors’ rights in school libraries. Here you’ll find answers to these questions:

- Does the First Amendment apply to minors in schools?
- What case law established minors’ right to read and receive information in the school library?
- Without being in positions of authority over others, how can school librarians be leaders and advocates in their schools?
- How can librarians design or shape curricula to help students understand the rights and responsibilities associated with their intellectual freedom?

Second, you’ll read about people and resources that can help you, including the staff at the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, ALA’s newly published Intellectual Freedom Manual, and statements like the ALA Code of Ethics. You’ll find answers to these questions:

- Who can you call if you’re faced with a challenge or with privacy or filtering questions and need some advice?
• Who works at the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom, what do they do, and how can they help you?
• What’s relevant to school librarians in the new edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual, and why should it be your go-to guide for writing policy, handling challenges, ensuring access, and protecting privacy?
• Is the ALA Code of Ethics still relevant for school librarians?

The third and largest cluster of articles covers specific intellectual freedom concerns including challenges, labeling, filtering, and privacy. Experts and practitioners share advice, reports, and personal stories that address the following:

• What is it like to defend library resources against a challenge?
• How does the challenge process look through the eyes of a school administrator and school board member?
• Are labeling and rating systems helpful or harmful to intellectual freedom?
• How are schools implementing CIPA (Children’s Internet Protection Act), and what are the educational and social consequences of Internet filtering?
• What should you do if you get a request for information about a student’s use of the library and its resources?

There’s more! The CBC Column looks at censorship, and the Technology Quest Column analyzes the benefits and challenges of the 1:1 and BYOD technology trends and details how school librarians’ involvement has made such programs successful in the author’s school district. AASL President Leslie Preddy also weighs in with her thoughts about intellectual freedom (and the upcoming national conference in November) in her first President’s Column.

Wait, we’re not done yet! This issue features three important and inspiring exclusively online articles about top intellectual freedom print and online resources, intellectual freedom in international schools, and how school libraries help bridge the divisions in our society and change lives.

We hope this special issue will inspire, inform, and instill confidence in your work as you seek to promote and defend the intellectual freedom of your students. By advocating for the freedom to read, you will improve your students’ education and increase their understanding of their responsibilities in a democratic society. You will enrich their lives and empower them to think, to evaluate information, and to make smart decisions. Nothing could be more central to the role of the school librarian.


Trina Magi is a library professor at the University of Vermont in Burlington where she works as a reference and instruction librarian. She is a member of the ALA Digital Content Working Group. She served as editor of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Manual, ninth edition, published April 2015. She has served on the intellectual freedom committees of the Vermont Library Association (chair 2006–2008), New England Library Association (chair 2012–2014), and American Library Association (2007–2011). She has also served as Vermont’s representative on ALA Council and has won numerous awards for her advocacy of civil liberties and intellectual freedom.

Happy 45th Birthday to the Freedom to Read Foundation

The FTRF was founded in 1969 to protect the First Amendment rights of library users to read and exchange ideas and to assist librarians whose jobs were in jeopardy because of their defense of free speech. Originally, FTRF defended First Amendment free speech rights in libraries through litigation and helped establish important legal precedents. However, in recent years, its role is gradually shifting to educating the library profession and the public about the strong connection between the First Amendment and libraries and the need to combat censorship. Learn more about FTRF at <www.ftrf.org>.
DO MINORS HAVE FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS IN SCHOOLS?

Theresa Chmara
Author’s Disclaimer:
This article does not constitute a legal opinion. Readers should consult their own legal counsel for legal advice regarding their particular situations.

Courts have held that minors have First Amendment rights and that those rights include the right to receive information. How does that apply in the school setting? Because the First Amendment guarantees that the government cannot infringe free speech rights, students cannot assert their First Amendment rights in a private school setting. The First Amendment prohibits governmental entities from unconstitutionally infringing rights of free speech. Students in public schools, therefore, do have rights under the First Amendment. Although public school officials retain substantial—though not absolute—discretion in designing school curricula, attempts to censor access to materials in the school library will not be permitted unless the restricted materials can be demonstrated to be educationally unsuitable.

The Supreme Court held in Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District that students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate.” Applying that principle, the court ordered a public school to allow students to wear black armbands in protest of the Vietnam War, explaining: “In our system, students may not be regarded as closed-circuit recipients of only that which the State chooses to communicate.”

Lower courts have echoed that sentiment. For example, in American Amusement Machine Association v. Kendrick, an appellate court held: “People are unlikely to become well-functioning, independent-minded adults and responsible citizens if they are raised in an intellectual bubble.” The courts also explicitly have held that minors’ First Amendment rights include the right to receive information.


2. Id. at 511.

The Right to Receive Information

In Board of Education v. Pico a school board attempted to remove books from a school library. The school board’s action did not restrict minors’ own expression, but the Supreme Court rejected the removal because “the right to receive ideas is a necessary predicate to the recipient’s meaningful exercise of his own rights of speech, press, and political freedom” and made clear that “students too are beneficiaries of this principle.”

There are two instances in which minors’ rights are narrower than those of adults. First, school officials have significant latitude if the removal is based objectively on a finding that the material is “educationally unsuitable” rather than on an official’s subjective disagreement with or disapproval of the content. The determination of whether material is “educationally unsuitable” is a fact-based inquiry that will generally require the testimony of educational experts.

Second, states can determine that certain materials are obscene for minors even if the materials are protected for adults. In Ginsberg v. New York the Supreme Court upheld the conviction of a magazine vendor for selling an adult magazine to a sixteen-year-old. The court explained that, although the magazine clearly was not obscene for adults, the state had acted within First Amendment bounds in adopting a broader definition of obscenity for minors. Most states have enacted “harmful to minors” obscenity statutes. Whether material is “harmful to minors” is a determination that must be made by a court.

Courts have, moreover, recognized limits on the Ginsberg principle. First, states may not simply ban minors’ exposure to a full category of speech, such as nudity, when only a subset of that category can plausibly be deemed obscene for them. Second, the determination of whether material is “harmful to minors” must be made by reference to the entire population of minors—including the oldest minors. For example, some lower courts have upheld restrictions on displays only if the restrictions did not prohibit the display of materials that would be appropriate for older minors.

Student Speech Rights

Although minors do not shed their First Amendment rights at the schoolhouse gate, the Supreme Court has held that students’ speech rights are not “automatically coextensive with the rights of adults in other settings” and has generally applied those rights in light of the special characteristics of the school environment. School officials also have greater discretion in the classroom and in the context of planned school events. In Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, for example, the Supreme Court permitted the removal of certain articles from a school newspaper. The student journalism class that wrote and edited the newspaper had planned to run several controversial stories about student pregnancy and the impact of divorce on students. The Supreme Court rejected the

5. Id. at 867.
6. Id. at 868. Other cases in which the Supreme Court emphasized minors’ right to receive information include Erznoznik v. City of Jacksonville, 422 U.S. 205, 213–14 (1975) (holding that “speech . . . cannot be suppressed solely to protect the young from ideas or images that a legislative body thinks unsuitable for them”) and Bolger v. Youngs Drug Products Corp., 463 U.S. 60, 75 n. 30 (1983) (criticizing a federal ban on mailing unsolicited contraceptive advertisements because it ignored adolescents’ “pressing need for information about contraception”).
14. Id. at 274.
Students' First Amendment Rights in the School Library Context, Therefore, Are Broader Than Those in a Class, a School-Sponsored Assembly, or Other Curriculum-Based Activities.

Students' First Amendment claims, finding that school officials have greater discretion when there is a danger that student expression will be perceived as "bearer[ing] the imprimatur of the school."\textsuperscript{15}

Similarly, in\textit{Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser} the Supreme Court held that a student could be disciplined for having delivered a speech that was sexually explicit, but not legally obscene, at an official school assembly.\textsuperscript{16} The court found it "perfectly appropriate for the school to disassociate itself to make the point to the pupils that vulgar speech and lewd conduct is wholly inconsistent with the 'fundamental values' of public school education."\textsuperscript{17}

In a more recent school discipline case,\textit{Morse v. Frederick}, the Supreme Court reiterated the important right that students have to participate in political speech, while at the same time providing school officials with authority to discipline students who advocate illegal drug use.\textsuperscript{18} A student was suspended from school for displaying a sign reading "Bong Hits 4 Jesus" across the street from the school when students had been dismissed from school to watch the Olympic torch relay travel through town. The court upheld the suspension on the ground that "schools may take steps to safeguard those entrusted to their care from speech that can reasonably be regarded as encouraging illegal drug use" and that "the school officials in this case did not violate the First Amendment by confiscating the pro-drug banner and suspending the student responsible for it."\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Student Rights, the Curriculum, and the School Library}

In applying\textit{Hazelwood} to other situations, lower courts have applied greater deference to school officials attempting to control curricular speech restrictions. For example, in\textit{Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County} the Court of Appeals affirmed a school board's decision to remove selected portions of \textit{The Miller's Tale} and \textit{Lysistrata} from a humanities course curriculum, stating: "In matters pertaining to the curriculum, educators have been accorded greater control over expression than they may enjoy in other spheres of activity."\textsuperscript{20} In upholding the removal, the court emphasized that the disputed materials remained in the school library,\textsuperscript{21} which, unlike a course

\textsuperscript{15} Id. at 271, 273 (holding that curriculum decisions are permissible if they are "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns").
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Bethel School District}, 478 U.S. at 685–86.
\textsuperscript{17} Id.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Morse v. Frederick}, 551 U.S. 393 (2007).
\textsuperscript{19} Id.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Virgil v. School Board of Columbia County}, 862 F.2d 1517, 1520 (11th Cir. 1989).
\textsuperscript{21} Id. at 1523, n. 8.
Public school officials must be cognizant of the First Amendment rights of minors when these officials make decisions about library resources, the curriculum, and policies related to extra-curricular activities.

Students’ First Amendment rights in the school library context, therefore, are broader than those in a class, a school-sponsored assembly, or other curriculum-based activities. For example, in Campbell v. St. Tammany Parish School Board the Court of Appeals confirmed that “the key inquiry in a book removal case is the school officials’ substantial motivation in arriving at the removal decision.” The court observed that “in light of the special role of the school library as a place where students may freely and voluntarily explore diverse topics, the school board’s non-curricular decision to remove a book well after it had been placed in the public school libraries evokes the question whether that action might not be an unconstitutional attempt to ‘strangle the free mind at its source’.” Similarly, the district court in Case v. Unified School District No. 233 found a school board’s removal of Annie on My Mind unconstitutional where a “substantial motivation” behind the library removal was the officials’ disagreement with the views expressed in the book.

In a more recent case, American Civil Liberties Union of Florida v. Miami-Dade School Board, the Eleventh Circuit upheld the school board’s removal of a picture book on the ground that the book was factually inaccurate. School board members defended their removal decision by arguing that the books were educationally unsuitable because they are viewpoint-neutral and omit detailed facts about Cuba’s totalitarian dictatorship. The ACLU expert noted, however, that the “alleged omissions are appropriate omissions given the age level and purpose for which the book is intended.”

The determination of whether a decision to censor materials is based on educational suitability or political motivation will be a fact-based inquiry in every instance. The conclusion that the Miami-Dade School Board did not engage in politically motivated censorship, therefore,

22. Id. at 1525 (quoting Pico, 457 U.S. at 869); but see Pratt v. Independent School District No. 831, 670 F.2d 771, 779 (8th Cir. 1982) (refusing to allow a school board to strike a short story, “The Lottery,” from the school curriculum merely because the story remained available in the school library).

23. Campbell v. St. Tammany Parish School Board, 64 F.3d 184, 190 (5th Cir. 1995).

24. Id.


28. Id.
would not preclude another court from finding in a different situation that removal of the same books in another library was unconstitutional discrimination based on viewpoint.

The removal of books from open shelves, rather than an outright removal from the library, also raises First Amendment concerns. In *Counts v. Cedarville School District* a federal court in Arkansas addressed a dispute over whether books from the *Harry Potter* series could be removed from the open shelves of a school library and available only with parental permission. The court held that the minor’s rights were violated by the removal of the books from the open shelves because the books were “stigmatized.”

**Internet Access and Filtering**

How do these principles apply in the context of Internet access? Plainly there are materials on the Internet that would fit the definition of “harmful to minors” and that are “educationally unsuitable.” However, the Internet also provides educators and students with a powerful tool for expanding their knowledge beyond what can be covered in the curriculum. From a technological standpoint filters simply cannot block only material that is obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors or determine the educational suitability of material. Filters will block materials of educational value.

The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) statute requires schools and libraries that receive federal E-Rate discounts or Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants for Internet access to use filters that will block visual images that are obscene, child pornography, or harmful to minors. That statute was upheld by the Supreme Court in one challenge because the justices concluded that filtering for adults at public libraries would be disabled by request and without the need for adults to justify their request for access to particular sites. That case did not address the issue of filtering in schools.

A school Internet filtering system recently was challenged in Camdenton, Missouri. In that case, the district court held that the school district was acting in an unconstitutional manner when it used a filtering system that blocked websites supporting or advocating on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people but permitted access to websites that condemn homosexuality or oppose legal protections for LGBT people. After the court’s finding, the school district agreed to stop blocking LGBT websites, submit to monitoring for eighteen months, and pay $125,000 in attorneys’ fees.

**Conclusion**

Public school officials must be cognizant of the First Amendment rights of minors when these officials make decisions about library resources, the curriculum, and policies related to extra-curricular activities. Decisions to restrict access to materials that are based on the officials’ disagreement with the views expressed in the material, rather than on their educational suitability, could subject the school district to litigation and substantial costs.

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Theresa Chmara is an attorney in Washington, DC, and general counsel of the Freedom to Read Foundation. She is the author of Privacy and Confidentiality Issues: A Guide for Libraries and their Lawyers (ALA 2009) and is also a contributor to ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Manual, 9th edition.
CREATING A CULTURE OF INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM THROUGH LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY
I was in my second year as a librarian, thrilled to have been hired for the high school in my new community. Mr. D., the venerated thirty-year-veteran principal, welcomed me with quiet and authoritative wisdom. And then, my fellow librarian and I discovered that Mr. D. was removing issues of Rolling Stone Magazine from the library mailbox and discarding them. Of course I knew that intellectual freedom was a foundation to my profession. But Mr. D. was like my grandfather!

When I summoned the courage to confront Mr. D., I finally understood what it took to be a librarian. It was not enough to proclaim a belief in intellectual freedom. I
had to stand up for my students’ rights to access information and express their views. I had to become a leader and advocate in order to build a culture of intellectual freedom in my school.

Culture involves behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and invisible norms and expectations. The question for school librarians is: How is a culture of intellectual freedom built, and what is the role of the librarian? School librarians are expected to be instructional leaders from “the middle.” They are not in positions of authority over other teachers, and yet they provide connective tissue across the school and often influence instructional strategies, the implementation of inquiry-based teaching, a focus on independent reading, the use of technology and resources, and the integration of skills instruction across the curriculum.

One would think that any environment of teaching and learning, especially one where inquiry and independent reading are promoted, would naturally foster intellectual freedom. Unfortunately, my early experience as a school librarian proved the fallacy of that assumption. If school librarians want to establish a culture of intellectual freedom, they must exert strong leadership and sustained advocacy.

Just as leadership does not mean having the authority to tell others what to do, advocacy does not mean telling other people what you do or believe. Advocacy is not a marketing campaign about your own priorities. Instead, advocacy means focusing on the priorities of others and developing a continuous and strategic effort to facilitate changes in behavior, beliefs, and attitudes that will enable others to reach their goals. A culture of intellectual freedom, through equitable access and freedom of expression, empowers individuals and even schools to grow and change.

School librarians must lead and advocate for a culture of intellectual freedom by enabling their school communities to take action in several realms: connections, policy, access, and student empowerment through inquiry and independent reading.

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**Figure 1.** Example map of community relationships and influence.
Building Connections

By establishing connections with parents, other educators, administrators, students, the school board, and community leaders, school librarians weave a collaborative network of influence that leads to actions and real change.

First, map the community in terms of size, influence, and interactions of groups and individuals. Figure out what constituencies might have the most influence in actively promoting (even demanding) intellectual freedom. Determine how individuals and organizations or groups are connected and who influences whom. In the example in figure 1, note the constituencies that have two-way influential relationships and those that are influenced by, but have no influence over, another group.

If, for example, a school librarian wanted to be sure that the school board adopted policies that supported intellectual freedom, then a strategic relationship to develop would be one with parents who have a strong influence over the school board.

Second, school librarians can use connections to establish clear linkages between the priorities of others and intellectual freedom. Parents often say they want their children to develop confidence and competence to pursue continued education or find a good job. Librarians can make it clear through examples, stories, and evidence that students develop those attributes in an intellectually free environment. When students have equitable access to multiple perspectives, for example, they develop the skills to differentiate between credible and inaccurate information and draw their own conclusions. Furthermore, they develop confidence in their ability to express their opinions supported by authoritative evidence.

Establishing Policies

Policies that support intellectual freedom principles are essential. A school librarian would be well served to review and perhaps revise key policies for approval by the administration and school board.

A collection-development policy ensures that the resources available (both physically and digitally) through the school library fulfill the promise of intellectual freedom and equitable access as stated in the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights (ALA 1996) and interpretations (accessible online from the “Library Bill of Rights” page). The policy should include attention to diverse student needs and interests, professional standards of evaluation/selection of resources in all formats, and criteria for guiding students in the selection and use of online resources and social-media tools. A challenged-materials procedure must be a part of every collection-development policy. The procedure should include clear forms and processes through which challengers provide the rationale and evidence for their challenges, and the review committee considers the requests in a fair and consistent manner.

School librarians must also make sure that their school or district has an appropriate-use policy (AUP) that protects the rights of students and specifies student responsibilities in the online environment. The policy should

A third policy that is becoming increasingly important is a social-media policy. School librarians must exercise both leadership and advocacy to shepherd the development and implementation of a social-media policy that maintains First Amendment rights and fosters the development of social responsibility in all students.
Young people who are empowered to be independent, responsible, and engaged participants in the world are the embodiment of intellectual freedom.

include both an affirmation of the educational value of online access to information and a clear description of acceptable and unacceptable behavior in use of the Internet. The policy should include statements about the importance of students’ maintaining personal safety and privacy, complying with copyright regulations and fair use standards, and employing the skills and responsibilities of digital citizenship.

A third policy that is becoming increasingly important is a social-media policy. School librarians must exercise both leadership and advocacy to shepherd the development and implementation of a social-media policy that maintains First Amendment rights and fosters the development of social responsibility in all students.

Maintaining Equitable Access

Equitable access to resources, whether they are situated in a physical library or online, is fundamental to a culture of intellectual freedom. School librarians provide equitable access by responding to changing demographics, balancing print and electronic resources, providing multiple perspectives, curating and guiding the use of online resources, and accommodating a wide variety of reading levels.
School librarians may have to advocate for changes in filtering practices. Some districts and schools employ very restrictive filters, far beyond what is required to receive federal E-Rate funds under the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) of 2000. CIPA requires only that schools implement protection measures that “block or filter Internet access to pictures that are: (a) obscene; (b) child pornography; or (c) harmful to minors (for computers that are accessed by minors)” (FCC 2014). School librarians offer the antidote to overfiltering by teaching students the necessary skills and attitudes to behave responsibly online.

School librarians may also need to respond to parents and educators who want to assign labels and ratings to library resources to “warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the resource” (ALA 2015). The librarian must exercise leadership, resist these efforts, and maintain a school library collection free of prejudicial labels.

Empowering Intellectual Freedom through Inquiry and Independent Reading

Young people who are empowered to be independent, responsible, and engaged participants in the world are the embodiment of intellectual freedom. School librarians must be leaders and advocates to create an atmosphere in which the characteristics of empowerment are fostered. Those characteristics include challenge, choice, voice, confidence, and competence.

When the school librarian teaches inquiry skills, students learn to challenge the validity and authority of the information they find and challenge themselves to form their own opinions and conclusions based on evidence. Inquiry enables students to make choices and develop their own path of acquiring and sharing knowledge.

Challenge and choice are also embedded within independent reading. Students who have the opportunity to make their own choices in their independent reading selections regularly challenge themselves to explore new ideas and pursue interests in depth. They choose to read materials that allow them to explore their own identities and connect to the real world.

Students develop their voices when librarians enable them to present, create, and perform the new understandings gained from inquiry and independent reading through products such as podcasts, videos, research-project presentations, debates, music productions, photo essays, performance of original scripts, and digital storytelling. Through learners’ productions and presentations, the school library is transformed into a vibrant learning commons of discovery and self-expression.

When school librarians teach the skills and dispositions of inquiry and facilitate independent reading, students develop both competence and confidence. Students become intellectually free when they have both the capability and the self-assurance to pursue their own paths to intellectual and personal growth.

School Librarians as Leaders and Advocates for Intellectual Freedom

Threats to intellectual freedom are calls to action. Though constitutionally guaranteed by the First Amendment, intellectual freedom may be denied to students by the policies and practices in schools and districts across the country. School librarians have a responsibility, even a mandate, to lead and advocate for intellectual freedom in our schools.

Barbara Stripling is assistant professor of practice at the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University in New York. She is a member of AASL, the past president of ALA, and a former member of the ALA Executive Board and the ALA Council. Barbara received the President’s Award from the Arkansas Library Association in 2014 and the Distinguished Service Award from the School Library System Association of New York in 2012. Her recent articles include “Reimagining Advocacy for School Libraries” and “I’m an Expert; School Libraries Build Enthusiastic Learners,” both included in the September/October 2014 American Libraries Digital Supplement “School Libraries Transform Learning.”

Works Cited:
DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM IN INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM
What Our Students Need to Know

Jole Seroff
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My interest in intellectual freedom was one of the predispositions that drew me to a career in school librarianship. I began working as a librarian at a large public school eleven years ago. Today I lead a team of three school librarians serving about 450 students in grades 6 through 12 at a 100-year-old secular independent school for girls in Silicon Valley, south of San Francisco. Like all independent schools, we operate separately from the public school system and are funded primarily by tuition. Beyond this commonality, the profiles of independent schools across the country vary tremendously, from schools with multiple sprawling campuses to tiny urban schools, serving students from pre-K–12, including both religiously affiliated and secular institutions. About 10 percent of America’s students attend independent schools (Council for American Private Education 2015).

Independent school librarians have the privilege and the challenge of crafting curricula and establishing priorities for our programs. How have we leveraged these opportunities to inform students about their rights and responsibilities with regard to intellectual freedom?

Respecting Divergent Viewpoints

I sought out the perspective of a particular ninth-grade student on the topic of intellectual freedom. She attended our school as a sixth-grader and then spent two years in India before she returned to begin high school. I asked her to compare her experience at an international school serving the children of diplomats and executives to our northern California independent school. In her opinion, intellectual freedom thrives in our school, but she remarked that she misses the diversity of opinions among her international peers. Hearing them articulate a broad range of positions helped her reflect on her own beliefs. So, while she praises our community, she also indicates a challenge posed by the relative uniformity of our population.

Contrary to my previous experience in urban public schools, the nonconforming viewpoint in my independent school is often a conservative or religious one. Creating space for these positions to be heard respectfully can be a challenge when the dominant culture of the institution is liberal and secular, but intellectual freedom is undermined if the school-wide discourse becomes hegemonic. Colleagues at other independent schools cite concerns that arise around student journalism as ground zero for such struggles. School librarians can contribute to an atmosphere
that supports intellectual freedom by drawing attention to the subtle messages about community values—messages that are communicated by virtue of what is included or excluded from our curricular and co-curricular offerings.

Internet Filtering and Access to Information
The Internet filter in the public schools where I began my career was a constant irritant. The algorithm was a blunt instrument that blocked sites based on a list of keywords and impeded access to valuable teaching tools such as YouTube. Students used proxy servers to dodge the Web filter daily. With imprecise filters that were easily outwitted, I felt complicit in creating a moral hazard, tempting students to break an ill-conceived rule, and I feared being held responsible for students’ illicit behavior on library computers.

If we want students to act honorably and responsibly, we must give them opportunities to earn our trust. Filters indicate an assumption that they are not worthy of trust. Many independent schools, including my own, offer unfiltered Internet access to all students. This unfiltered access sends the powerful message that our institution values free access to information and trusts educators to help students make good choices. This increased freedom is scaffolded by an acceptable-use policy that uses clear language to outline expectations. Further, many independent schools have honor codes that are central to a school’s identity. Building on these ethical foundations, we teach students the practical skills and discernment necessary to navigate the ever-growing world of information.

Censorship and the Freedom to Read
Promoting the freedom to read widely has long been a core aspect of library programs. Banned Books Week creates an opportunity to focus on this theme. Like many libraries, we set up informative, eye-catching displays that arouse curiosity in our young patrons. We also host a special program for our eighth-grade students. Collaboration with English teachers aligns this program with study of The Book Thief, a story in which control of information plays a critical role. Marcus Zusak’s excellent book sensitizes students to the potential of the written word to effect societal and personal change. Our students learn about common reasons for contemporary book challenges and the advocacy role of dedicated librarians. We examine ALA’s Freedom to Read statement, affirming that each student, together with her family, has the right to decide what is appropriate for herself (2004).

We also explain how our collection is developed, highlighting the difference between censorship and selection. Some years we’ve been fortunate to host Skype visits with authors who have experienced censorship. This program has been incredibly effective at making the impact of book challenges tangible for students.

Intellectual Property and Fair Use
Today’s students are not only consumers of information; technology has increased opportunities to create and publish independently. Appropriating and remixing aspects of existing creative works is a significant component of contemporary art and publishing. While students have a sense that much of their use of copyrighted materials is extralegal, they tend to have an oversimplified understanding of the law and their rights. How can we empower students to fully exercise their intellectual freedom as content creators, while instilling a respect for intellectual property?

Our school library provides an annual workshop on intellectual property and fair use. This program is linked to tenth-grade history, a course in which students study American government and debate controversial issues. We provide background on the history and purpose of copyright law, and
examine case studies. Students frame arguments both for and against fair use in each case before hearing the verdict found by the courts.

A colleague at another independent school described the “culture of attribution” her library has been instrumental in building. Taking responsibility for use of copyrighted materials also means taking ownership of the contribution made to the scholarly dialogue or aesthetic culture by remixing, juxtaposing, and reflecting on the works of others. Our students are introduced to the Creative Commons licensing structure as an alternative to the “all rights reserved” approach. We can help students see attribution as not just a chore but as an opportunity to participate in creation and sharing of knowledge.

Privacy Rights and Responsibilities

In our networked age, students face complex questions of privacy. We recognize the benefits provided by technologies like smartphones and GPS, but we know they produce huge quantities of data about our private lives. Intellectual freedom is curtailed when we are subject to surveillance. Even strictly legal and non-embarassing information can be misconstrued; even our trusted retailers and institutions can be hacked.

As an introduction to these thorny issues, we teach a lesson to mark ALA’s Choose Privacy Week. Our eighth-grade students, who study American history and travel to visit the nation’s capital, are primed to consider privacy rights within some historical context. We examine the Fourth Amendment, which guarantees freedom from unreasonable
search and seizure. We clarify that, because these restrictions apply only to government agents, students in public schools have more legal privacy protection than students in independent schools (Massachusetts n.d.). We also consider the limitations of the amendment; sharing information with a third party may forfeit the “reasonable expectation of privacy.” Students compromise their privacy rights when they share personal information with service providers, including social-media platforms and search engines.

Students Google their own names, examine the results, and are counseled on how to manage their digital footprints. We suggest they keep their personal accounts and usernames separate from their more formal, school-related online identity. We remind them that college admissions officers and potential employers will one day evaluate them in light of their digital profiles. We coach students on reviewing privacy settings for services they use and urge them to consider the benefits of cloaked browsing and anti-tracking browser extensions such as Privacy Badger (Electronic Frontier Foundation n.d.). This year students created short video public service announcements based on “factsheets” we provided on topics such as strong passwords and protecting users’ privacy while engaging with social media.

A Question of Values

Intellectual freedom is not a value we hold in a vacuum but, instead, in a particular time and place. Throughout history and across the world today, unfettered access to information is the exception, not the norm. It is our responsibility to exercise and defend this freedom in our own society, while striving to understand the historical and political contexts that frame this issue differently in many cultures around the world.

Reflecting on our instructional program through the lens of intellectual freedom has reinforced a few key tenets. First, library instruction is always most relevant to students when it is linked to classroom curricula. Second, when we’re training students in matters involving ethics and personal choice, it is key to avoid being overly didactic; instead, we help students understand their options and provide them with tools. Finally, we cannot do our best work in isolation. It is essential to enlist the support of colleagues if we are to build a culture of intellectual freedom in our schools.

Works Cited:


DEBBORAH CALDWELL-STONE, NANETTE PEREZ, BARBARA JONES, AND KRISTIN PEKOLL.
Who We Are and How We Help Librarians

Kristin Pekoll
kpekoll@ala.org
“Good Morning, Office for Intellectual Freedom. This is Kristin.”

—silence—

“Hello?”

“Oh, I’m sorry; I just expected to get a recording.”

This response brings a smile to my face. First, because I love that I’m able to provide a human connection to our callers. Second, because I would have thought the same thing before I started to work for this incredible organization. The American Library Association (ALA) seemed so much bigger and more powerful than “little ol’ me everyday librarian.” But now that I’m working here, I get to see all the people with diverse backgrounds, intelligence, and passion working to provide resources and advocate for librarians.

ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) strives to educate librarians and the public about the nature and importance of intellectual freedom in libraries, and it will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 2017.

Libraries are a forum for information and ideas (under the First Amendment), and librarians are responsible for making sure that every person has equitable and unrestricted access. At OIF, our first priority is to make sure that all librarians, educators, and users know this. Our second priority is to fight any attempts to limit or remove access.

Anyone can call us with questions or to report a challenge. A person does not have to be a member of ALA to inquire about best library practices for 3-D printers or get advice on how to communicate with a coworker who doesn’t understand censorship. We try to ensure someone is in the office during all business hours to answer the phone, and we are available by e-mail. We follow many electronic discussion lists in case a thread arises regarding intellectual freedom issues about which we can help. Among the discussion lists we follow are those of the Young Adult Library Services Association (yalsa-bk), American Association of School Librarians forum (aaslforum), School Library Media & Network Communications (lm-net), and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE Connected Community). We monitor not only our own social-media pages but also ALA Think Tank and other librarian-saturated sites.

As an office, we educate. OIF staff write articles and books, and speak at conferences. We facilitate annual events like Banned Books Week (September) and Choose Privacy Week (May). OIF gathers resources and answers questions about labeling books, filtering the Internet, developing policies, managing meeting rooms and display spaces, requiring permission slips, and defining a challenge. Members of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee and OIF staff have created interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights that were approved by ALA Council. These interpretations help guide decisions made on the front lines. In addition to the interpretations, tool kits, Q&As, and white papers are all available (for free) to help librarians, other educators, journalists, and other interested
parties decipher the different facets of complex issues related to intellectual freedom. For example, in 2014 OIF with the Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) published a report on Internet accessibility. “Fencing Out Knowledge” addresses the impact of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) in schools and public libraries. This report is a great tool to help educate administrators and school boards to develop policies that allow the broadest online information access allowed by law. (KQ editor’s note: An article by researcher Kristen Batch “Filtering beyond CIPA: Consequences of and Alternatives to Overfiltering in Schools” begins on page 60 in this issue.)

Our office also has made communication with librarians in each state a priority. We host quarterly Web meetings to discuss ideas and report happenings around the country. Most state library associations have an intellectual freedom committee or roundtable. Some states have two intellectual freedom representatives: one for their state association and a separate voice for school librarians. A significant majority of the challenges that are reported to OIF happen in school libraries and classrooms. School librarians typically have a policy structure and order of command—different from those for public and academic libraries—that affect how challenges are handled. It’s incredibly important to hear school librarians’ viewpoints at the “State of the States” Web meetings.

As a professional association designed to support librarians, we follow the lead of the people we are working with. In some situations publicly aligning with outside advocates may not be the best course of action for a librarian in a tenuous environment. Without permission, we will never reveal who contacts our office or why.

Anyone can call us with questions to report a challenge.

Kristin Pekoll is the assistant director for the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom in Chicago. She wrote the September 2014 article “Why Gay Characters Matter” for Huffington Post and the September 2014 article “Book Challenge Procedures” for the International Literacy Association.
MEET THE OIF STAFF

BARBARA JONES
bjones@ala.org | (800) 545-2433 x4222
Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom
Executive Director, Freedom to Read Foundation

Major Responsibilities:
• Advocate for the freedom to read in all types of libraries.
• Work with ALA members to support and create information policy for intellectual freedom and privacy for all types of libraries.
• Support professional development of librarians and library workers by providing educational opportunities regarding intellectual freedom and privacy.
• Lead the Freedom to Read Foundation in its legal and educational agenda.

Personal/Professional Highlights:
• Has a PhD in U.S. History focusing on legal issues. Therefore, she is “very interested in the history of constitutional law.”
• Has presented workshops on intellectual freedom in South Africa, Nigeria, Canada, Mexico, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Brazil, Croatia, Serbia, Ukraine, Philippines, Sweden, Lebanon, Japan, and the United States.
• Hobbies include playing banjo, quilting, knitting, and she says, “I am a Sherlockian film addict, especially documentaries.”

Favorite Banned or Challenged Books:
To Kill a Mockingbird and Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

DEBORAH CALDWELL-STONE
dstone@ala.org | (800) 545-2433 x4224
Deputy Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom
Deputy Director, Freedom to Read Foundation

Major Responsibilities:
• Research and prepare legal and policy materials related to intellectual freedom and privacy.
• Consult with and assist librarians, educators, trustees, and board members developing local law and policy addressing access, intellectual freedom, and privacy.
• Communicate ALA’s intellectual freedom messages by speaking to the press and coordinating the OIF’s publication initiatives.
• Support the work of the Freedom to Read Foundation via research, writing, and training initiatives and working with partner organizations.

Personal/Professional Highlights:
• Licensed attorney with an abiding interest in the application of First Amendment law, especially minors’ First Amendment rights, Internet censorship (including the overuse and abuse of filtering software in libraries), and use of the First Amendment to enhance privacy rights in libraries.
• Enjoys hiking in backwoods and wilderness areas and travel of all kinds.

Favorite Banned or Challenged Book:
To Kill a Mockingbird (She says, “Oddly enough, it did not inspire me to pursue a career in law.”)
Who works at the Office for Intellectual Freedom? We’re introducing the OIF staff by name and title, providing contact info, a brief list of their major responsibilities, their backgrounds, and the names of their favorite banned or frequently challenged books. Their photos are also provided, so you can put a face with a name.

**KRISTIN PEKOLL**  
kpekoll@ala.org | (800) 545-2433 x4221  
Assistant Director, ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom

**Major Responsibilities:**
- Support librarians, teachers, administrators, parents, and students experiencing a library or classroom resource challenge.
- Coordinate webinars on intellectual freedom principles and timely popular topics.
- Write and speak on behalf of the Office for Intellectual Freedom to the press and at conferences.

**Personal/Professional Highlights:**
- During a very public serial book challenge, as a young adult librarian in Wisconsin, succeeded in keeping eighty-six young adult books on the shelf of her public library with the help of the director, library board, and community.
- Raising two brilliant, vocal, open-minded, precocious kids; doing crossword puzzles; and knitting.

**Favorite Banned or Challenged Book:**  
*Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher.

**NANETTE PEREZ**  
nperez@ala.org | (800) 545-2433 x4225  
Program Officer, ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom

**Major Responsibilities:**
- Serve as co-staff liaison to the Intellectual Freedom Committee.
- Coordinate Banned Books Week activities.
- Serve as co-staff liaison to the jury for the Lemony Snicket Prize for Noble Librarians Faced with Adversity.

**Personal/Professional Highlights:**
- Produced many videos featuring highly acclaimed banned/challenged authors and celebrities for the Banned Books Week Virtual Read-Out available at [www.youtube.com/bannedbooksweek](http://www.youtube.com/bannedbooksweek).
- Relatively recently graduated from Northwestern University with a major in English Literature, accomplished while working full-time and caring for a son.

**Favorite Banned or Challenged Book**  
*Beloved* by Toni Morrison. (She says, "Selecting a favorite is like choosing your favorite child.")
Newly Revised Intellectual Freedom Manual Makes It Easier to Find the Help You Need

Trina Magi
trina.magi@uvm.edu
School librarians regularly face difficult intellectual freedom questions. What should you do if a parent complains about a library book? Is it a good idea to put grade- or reading-level labels on the outside of books or use labels to determine what students should read? Do children have First Amendment rights? The ALA Intellectual Freedom Manual provides answers and guidance.

The Intellectual Freedom Manual has been an essential resource for decades. Over time, it grew considerably in size and scope, containing official ALA policy statements on intellectual freedom and essays about the history of those statements. Based on feedback from librarians, the ninth edition has been revised and reorganized. The new topical arrangement makes it easier for busy librarians to find help quickly. Also, the historical essays were removed and published in a separate companion volume, A History of ALA Policy on Intellectual Freedom: A Supplement to the Intellectual Freedom Manual, making space in the manual for new content, including significantly more content for school librarians.

The Intellectual Freedom Manual has been an essential resource for decades... The new topical arrangement makes it easier for busy librarians to find help quickly.

What’s Included

The book includes official ALA policy statements on intellectual freedom, including core documents such as the Library Bill
The library profession has a long history of defending and promoting freedom of expression and the freedom to read. School librarians and their supporters will find this new edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual a valuable and easy-to-use resource as they continue this important work.

The manual is published under the direction of the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom. Additional information about intellectual freedom issues—and newly adopted and revised ALA policies—can be found on the ALA "Intellectual Freedom" website <www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom>. Also consider joining IFACTION, a news-only, no-discussion electronic list on intellectual freedom issues. Go to <lists.ala.org/sympa> and click "ALA Offices" and then "Office for Intellectual Freedom."

of Rights, The Freedom to Read, and Code of Ethics of the American Library Association; interpretations of those documents; and ALA Council resolutions. Developed by ALA members and ratified by the ALA Council through the association's democratic process, these policies articulate the library profession's values and best practices.

The book also includes guidelines, checklists, essays, and question-and-answer documents. For example, in this edition you'll find:

- "Issue at a Glance" pages, which highlight important points related to each of nine intellectual freedom issues, including points labeled "Especially for School Libraries"
- Practical, step-by-step instructions for responding to challenges to library resources, from oral expressions of concern through formal written complaints and public hearings, with special advice for school librarians
- An essay about intellectual freedom and young people, written by a retired school librarian with a wealth of experience
- An essay about labeling and rating systems, which are becoming more prevalent in school libraries
- Expanded content about Internet filtering, and advice about how you can work to protect intellectual freedom even if your school is required to install filters
- Expanded content about how to develop five essential policies to protect intellectual freedom in your library
- Information about copyright, including a new interpretation of ALA's Code of Ethics and an essay about the law regarding copyright
- Information about responding to requests from law enforcement
- An expanded "Glossary of Terms" to help you understand technical and legal terms

All materials in this journal subject to copyright by the American Library Association may be used for the noncommercial purposes of scientific or educational advancement granted by Sections 107 and 108 of the Copyright Revision Act of 1976. Address usage requests to the ALA Office of Rights and Permissions.
How It’s Arranged

The new manual has three parts. Part 1, “Intellectual Freedom and Libraries,” provides foundational information. It begins with an essay that defines intellectual freedom and explains how it applies to school, public, and academic libraries. Core intellectual freedom documents of ALA, such as Library Bill of Rights, are presented next, followed by practical information about how to create five library policies that support intellectual freedom: collection development and resource reconsideration, Internet use, use of meeting rooms and exhibit spaces, privacy and confidentiality, and user behavior and library use.

Part 2, “Intellectual Freedom Issues and Best Practices,” contains nine chapters focusing on intellectual freedom issues:

1. Access to Library Resources and Services
2. Censorship, Challenged Resources, and Internet Filtering
3. Children and Youth
4. Collection Development and Management
5. Copyright
6. Meeting Rooms, Exhibit Spaces, and Programs
7. Privacy and Confidentiality
8. Visits and Requests from Law Enforcement
9. Workplace Speech

Each chapter begins with a summary called “Issue at a Glance,” covering key concepts, points of law, additional resources, tips for various types of libraries, and questions for reflection. “Issue at a Glance” is followed by relevant “Official ALA Policy Statements.” Finally, each chapter includes “A Deeper Look”—one or more essays expanding on the issue. Many of the “Deeper Look” essays provide information about laws related to library operations. This information will help you understand your legal obligations, but it is not intended as legal advice. If legal advice or expert assistance is required, you should seek the services of a competent legal professional, such as your district’s legal counsel.

Part 3, “Advocacy and Assistance,” offers practical information about how to communicate about intellectual freedom, work with the media, lobby legislators, get help, and get involved in promoting and defending intellectual freedom.

The appendixes include an expanded “Glossary of Terms” and “Selected Bibliography.”

How to Use the Manual in Your School Library

- Refer to it when developing library policy—Review the chapter “Creating Intellectual Freedom Policies for Your Library.”
- Turn to it for guidance when a question or problem emerges—Consult the relevant chapter in “Intellectual Freedom Issues and Best Practices,” review the tips in the chapter “Communicating about Intellectual Freedom,” and consult “Where to Get Help and Get Involved” if you need additional help.
- Use it to orient new library employees, volunteers, other educators, administrators, and board members—Ask them to read “What Is Intellectual Freedom?” and “Core Intellectual Freedom Documents of the American Library Association.”
- Use it for professional development—Consider having library staff and volunteers read the chapters in “Intellectual Freedom Issues and Best Practices,” and schedule time to discuss the provided “Questions for Reflection.” Some of the questions are easily answered after reading the chapter; others present more difficult ethical challenges that are likely to stimulate interesting discussions.
- Use it to connect with other librarians and help promote intellectual freedom—Read “Where to Get Help and Get Involved” to learn about organizations, committees, programs, and awards that focus on intellectual freedom.

The library profession has a long history of defending and promoting freedom of expression and the freedom to read. School librarians and their supporters will find this new edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual a valuable and easy-to-use resource as they continue this important work.

Trina Magi is a library professor at the University of Vermont in Burlington where she works as a reference and instruction librarian. She is a member of the ALA Digital Content Working Group. She served as editor of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Manual, ninth edition, published April 2015. She has served on the intellectual freedom committees of the Vermont Library Association (chair 2006–2008), New England Library Association (chair 2012–2014), and American Library Association (2007–2011). She has also served as Vermont’s representative on ALA Council and has won numerous awards for her advocacy of civil liberties and intellectual freedom.
AREN OUR PRINCIPLES STILL RELEVANT?

Martin Garnar
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In 1939 technological advances included the first handheld electric slicing knife, the first mass-produced helicopter, and the first transmission of a picture via a cable system (Science and Technology 2001). That year also saw the first Code of Ethics adopted by the American Library Association (ALA OIF 2010, 311). Can an ethical code first promulgated the year World War II began remain relevant more than a decade into the twenty-first century? This article will demonstrate why our ethical principles are more important than ever and will inform the reader about the latest developments related to the Code of Ethics.

Overseen by the Committee on Professional Ethics (COPE), the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association outlines the key concerns of the library profession, including our commitment to equal and equitable access to information, our opposition to censorship, our protection of privacy, and our nuanced relationship with copyrighted information. It is not a static document; indeed, it has changed significantly over the years, with the version most familiar to current librarians dating to 1995. The Code of Ethics is an aspirational expression of our core principles, and in everyday situations librarians may sometimes need assistance in translating those principles into actions. School librarians, who are often the only library professionals in their buildings, may have to explain defense of controversial materials to colleagues—some of whom may not share the same commitment to free access to information. For this reason, it is important for COPE to be aware of current ethical concerns and provide guidance to librarians.

We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders. (ALA 2010) [italics added to indicate new text]

In preparing the ninth edition of ALA’s Intellectual Freedom Manual, the editor interviewed librarians to determine if there were new areas of concern that needed to be addressed. This change was adopted by the ALA Council, but the text of Article IV was still the only guidance on anything related to copyright from a perspective of intellectual freedom or ethics. In 2013 COPE began working with other ALA offices, committees, and experts to draft a statement on copyright. COPE used the model of interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights, which provides an opportunity to expand upon concepts found within the Library Bill of Rights without having to alter the original document. After months of drafting, public comment periods, and revisions, COPE presented “Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Ethics” to the ALA Council, which adopted the statement at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference (ALA 2014).

The copyright interpretation goes beyond a statement of principles to provide clear guidance regarding the expectations and responsibilities of librarians. It defines copyright for the purposes of librarians, and describes the special privileges accorded to librarians in the context of appropriate use of copyrighted materials. After enumerating the rights of libraries regarding the creation of copies and the preservation of information, the copyright interpretation also outlines the expectations for librarians’ professional competencies...
related to copyright. These include the expectation for librarians to:

...remain informed about copyright developments, particularly those that can limit or restrict the rights of users or libraries. Librarians should develop a solid understanding of the purpose of the law and knowledge of the details of the law relevant to the activities of the library, the ability to critically analyze circumstances relying on fair use or other limits to the rights of copyright holders, and the confidence to implement the law using good judgment. (ALA 2014)

These expectations clearly define librarians’ role as copyright experts within their institutions. While this role may seem daunting, many sources can help librarians stay informed. Carrie Russell’s Complete Copyright for K–12 Librarians and Educators [ALA 2012] is an excellent resource for learning more about scenarios specific to the school library environment. In addition, Copyright Law for Librarians and Educators by Kenneth Crews [ALA 2012] provides detailed information about copyright law and its implications for librarians in all types of institutions.

Copyright is one of many issues addressed by the Code of Ethics (ALA 2008) that have continuing relevance. Reviewing the code reveals a plethora of additional current concerns:

- “We provide the highest level of service to all library users...” [Article I]—Without librarians in every school, service to students and teachers will be diminished. Numerous studies have shown the connection between school librarians and academic achievement (Lance and Russell 2004).

- “We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith...” [Article VI]—There is a timeless need to remind everyone about the expectations for professional conduct, especially when staffing is stretched thin due to tight budget situations.

- “We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions” [Article VI]—Like all other librarians, school librarians must conform to expectations regarding the separation of our professional responsibilities and any private interests, such as side businesses and family ownership of potential vendors.

- “We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere...” [Article VII]—School librarians must leave their personal opinions and beliefs at home, and must assure that their collections and services are not influenced by their personal beliefs.

- “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” [Article VIII]—Because tight budgets sometimes do not allow paying for
OUR ETHICS ARE STILL RELEVANT TODAY MORE THAN SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER THEIR INITIAL ADOPTION, AND THE PRINCIPLES IN THE CODE OF ETHICS CONTINUE TO SHAPE THE WORK WE DO.
substitutes, school librarians have more barriers to overcome to take advantage of professional development opportunities. Additionally, the precarious funding for school libraries adds another hurdle to recruiting new talent to the field.

In addition to these issues, school librarians must also be aware of these ethical concerns:

- **Digital Divide**: A lack of consistent access to broadband Internet connections combined with the economic barriers to device ownership means that school libraries will continue to be the best option for underprivileged students to access online information. Compensating for and, when possible, eliminating the digital divide are directly related to the Code of Ethics statement in Article I regarding equitable access.

- **Diversity**: The latest statistics report that just 12 percent of librarians self-identify as people of color (ALA 2012). Given the increasing diversity of our communities, all librarians, including school librarians, face the challenge of connecting with communities that may not reflect the demographics of the available professional librarians.

- **User-Created Content**: School libraries have always been laboratories for creation and learning. With the advent of makerspaces and other initiatives to spur creativity in our libraries, we must consider how to balance the free-expression rights of our users with the challenges of keeping our libraries a safe space for all users. Like the helicopter and images transmitted by cable, our ethics are still relevant today more than seventy-five years after their initial adoption, and the principles in the Code of Ethics continue to shape the work we do. Copyright, though a more recent ethical concern, is central to our profession. Without the resources made available through the incentives of copyright, our library shelves would be empty. At the same time, without the limits on copyright that exist under current law, our users would be severely restricted in their ability to engage and transform information into new forms of knowledge. As librarians, we are called to educate our communities about both the freedoms and restrictions of using copyrighted materials, and school librarians have a special obligation to teach students about the ethical use of copyrighted information.

The Committee on Professional Ethics and other units of ALA will continue to provide guidance on these matters. To provide the most relevant assistance, COPE invites school librarians to suggest new topics for interpretation and explanation. Together, we will ensure that our profession is ready to take on the latest ethical challenges while continuing to provide library users with the highest level of service.

**Works Cited**


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**Martin Garnar**

The dean of the Kraemer Family Library at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs.

STANDING BY THEIR PRINCIPLES

Two Librarians Who Faced Challenges

Introduction by Helen Adams
What do school librarians fear most? Hands down, their biggest fear is a formal challenge to a resource in the school library. There are no accurate statistics about the number of challenges to school library resources. The staff of ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom estimates that only about 20 percent are reported to ALA annually. For the year 2014 the number of challenges reported was 311 (ALA 2015).

In the article that follows, two courageous school librarians tell the stories of their challenges and what they learned. Both were recognized with national awards for their stands against censorship. Dee Ann Venuto received the American Association of School Librarians Intellectual Freedom Award in 2011, and in 2013 DaNae Leu was awarded the Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award from the faculty of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

DaNae Leu
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When parents and school librarians draw battle lines over censorship, both sides see themselves as defending young minds. Typically, parents have discovered a book in the school library collection that they find unacceptable for their own child based on values they hold dear, and say “This does not belong in our house.” On the other hand, the First Amendment and the Library Bill of Rights ethically bind the librarian to provide access to an expanse of information beyond what is right for a limited segment of the student body. Everyone involved is striving to uphold honorable principles.

In 2012 a kindergartener in Davis School District brought home a library book that disturbed her mother. The picture book In Our Mothers’ House by Patricia Polacco portrays a family with same-gender parents. The student’s mother contacted the school librarian and asked for the book’s removal. The librarian explained that there was a process by which books could be reconsidered. The mother filled out the form, and the librarian assembled the committee. The committee determined that the

Work Cited:
I FEEL STRONGLY THAT ALL CHILDREN DESERVE TO SEE THEIR LIVES, THEIR EXPERIENCES, AND THEIR FAMILIES REFLECTED BACK IN THE BOOKS THEY READ.
laundry; others called it a heroic stance for intellectual freedom.

Once the article broke, groups from across the country also began turning their attention toward our situation. The Intellectual Freedom Committee of the Utah Library Association offered assistance, as did the National Coalition Against Censorship. The Utah chapter of the ACLU let its concerns be known, along with many LGBT groups across the state.

The district continued to stand by the decision to remove *In Our Mothers’ House* from the shelves but quickly extinguished the plan to remove any other books. In the fall of 2012 the ACLU brought a lawsuit on behalf of a parent, charging that her children’s First Amendment rights had been violated by limiting access to the book. Before the suit could go to court, Davis School District conceded that library books were not curricular resources, eliminating the rationale for removing the book from open circulation (ACLU 2013). The books were immediately returned to the shelves. As a result of this ordeal, our district took a hard look at policies and created strong guidelines to assist librarians when faced with future challenges.

I feel strongly that all children deserve to see their lives, their experiences, and their families reflected back in the books they read. They should also be lucky enough to see other lives, other experiences, and other families. That is the promise of the First Amendment, and I am proud to uphold it.

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The challenge at my school, Rancocas Valley Regional High, began when almost twenty community members attended a board meeting, accompanied by a county newspaper editorialist, asking for the removal of three library books. The group provided information about what they claimed to be President Obama’s “homosexual agenda,” which included appointing Kevin Jennings, former president of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), to the U.S. Department of Education as assistant deputy secretary in the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. Members of the group had searched our high school library’s online catalog for book titles recommended by GLSEN and requested their removal. The books in question all deal with the topic of sexuality and individuals who identify as LGBT: Revolutionary Voices, The Full Spectrum, and Love and Sex.

Who Were the Challengers?
Based on previous complaints, our superintendent believed the group at the board meeting was affiliated with Glenn Beck’s 9/12 Project. Searching the Internet, we discovered this to be true. Surprisingly, their online communications were not private, and hundreds of posts regarding plans and ideology were revealed. These made it clear that 9/12-ers did not value the tolerance education taught in public schools and were planning a “blitz of local school boards” to inform them of the “homosexual liberal takeover... and request removal of materials” (Blitz 2010). Their decision to go public and bring in the press made it easier for us to be transparent and public in our response.

Our Response
With the aid of the superintendent, national organizations, and members of the review committee, a host of information resources, including policies, articles, and letters, were assembled regarding the challenge. The committee members read these sources and the books in question, voting to keep two titles on the shelves and remove Revolutionary Voices.

POST CHALLENGE I BECAME A BETTER TEACHER, MORE ADEPT AT COMMUNICATING THE PURPOSE OF LIBRARIES IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.
Meanwhile, 9/12 members enacted their plans, presenting information to area high schools where formal complaints were never submitted. The American Library Association, American Civil Liberties Union, National Coalition Against Censorship, and state organizations issued statements of support, and a group of local actors took readings from Revolutionary Voices on the road as a peaceful protest. Later we learned through Open Public Records Act requests that the local public library had removed all copies of Revolutionary Voices from its branches without due process.

The Personal Side of a Challenge

As a librarian, the concept of defending intellectual freedom seems logical in theory. However, in practice, the process can become difficult, making professionalism paramount. While following policy and procedure to review the books, I became a target as well, referred to as sexualizing and indoctrinating children. One cannot deny the emotional toll a challenge can take. Never did I expect to be portrayed as someone who did not protect and care for young adults. Conversely, never did I expect the level of support I received from the dedicated individuals in ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom and the National Coalition Against Censorship. Fortunately, because I quickly saw the political, social, and possibly national connections of this organized challenge, I reached out to these professionals who provided me with emotional support, talking points, and options. In some ways they were therapy for the stress. I would not have handled interactions with stakeholders or the media as well without these great people.

Results of the Challenge

This challenge allowed me the opportunity to write, lecture, and collaborate with other librarians on the front lines of advocating for the principles libraries uphold. Post challenge I became a better teacher, more adept at communicating the purpose of libraries in a democratic society. Through our curriculum, students receive bibliographic/research instruction each year of high school. They are made aware of the librarians’ Code of Ethics and are educated about the process of removal and selection of materials in collections. We speak of privacy, labeling, voluntary censorship, data mining, filters, civic participation, and access rights. Our students are better educated on the purpose of libraries and the services they provide. Students are empowered to choose the best resources for themselves.

As a result of the challenge, I’ve increased justifications for acquisitions, particularly in urban literature, music, and graphic novels. These justifications include purchasing books from suggested bibliographies and, as support, relying on documents such as ALA’s Library Bill of Rights, Intellectual Freedom Manual, and the Freedom to Read statement. In regard to providing access to information, I am compelled to serve students’ needs, advocate for their First Amendment rights, and meet their requests. For certain, decisions about providing materials, particularly materials rated “R” or CDs with sexually explicit language, pose difficult questions for librarians. However, I am proud to say that among our 500 plus seniors, 75 percent report the library “most definitely” impacted the value of their education, and 63 percent will use libraries in the future. Important tenets of librarianship are closely linked to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights; it is our duty to uphold these and educate our students about them.

Dee Ann Venuto is the school librarian for Rancocas Valley Regional High School in Mt. Holly, New Jersey. She is a member of AASL and chair of the New Jersey Association of School Librarians Intellectual Freedom Committee. She received the AASL Intellectual Freedom Award in 2011 and the New Jersey Library Association Intellectual Freedom Award in 2011, and in 2010 she was honored by the National Coalition Against Censorship as a defender of free speech. She wrote the article “Managing Challenges to Library Resources,” which was published in the December 2014/January 2015 issue of School Library Monthly.

Work Cited:

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Perspectives of a Superintendent and a School Board Member

Introduction by Helen Adams
School librarians often wonder whether school superintendents and school board members understand and support intellectual freedom for students in K–12 schools. In this unique article, an administrator and a school board member discuss their thoughts and the actions they took to support access to information in the face of formal challenges to school library resources. Share their stories with your administrators and school board members when you talk with them about intellectual freedom.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

**Michael D. Moskalski**  
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Challenges to books used in schools, removal of books from libraries, and other forms of censorship are not new. Thirty-eight years’ experience as a principal and superintendent presented me with numerous opportunities to respond to challenges. The challenges usually came from a parent regarding a required reading or a library book with “dirty” words. Responses to these challenges occurred at the building level and followed established guidelines such as asking the challenger to put the complaint in writing and answer a series of questions. Sometimes an alternative assignment was provided for classroom work, but library books were never removed.

**A Three-Book Challenge**

My ideas about how these issues are resolved expanded in 2008 when more than twenty people showed up at a board meeting with a petition calling for the removal of three books from the school library: *Revolutionary Voices, Love and Sex*, and *The Full Spectrum*. All three deal with learning about love from an LGBT perspective. Many in the group addressed the school board with great shows of indignation that the books were in the school library where they could harm the minds of young people. Debates in open forums frequently encourage people to “perform” and take positions that leave no room for compromise. The school board eventually referred the complaint to me as superintendent. My first step was to begin a formal process by asking the group to complete a complaint form and attach their names and petition to the complaint. This provided time to work with the head librarian to develop a process for responding to the complaint.

**Lessons Learned**

Along the way, we learned several lessons. First, school board meetings previously had been attended by a few people who normally just observed the proceedings. As a result, no policies or procedures were in place to limit or focus discussion. We needed a documented procedure for keeping discussions on point. Second, when the head librarian and I started...
looking at policies regarding forms and processes for handling complaints, we discovered they were not in the district policy manual. The head librarian remembered a process for handling complaints, and she did find procedures recommended by ALA a number of years ago. It is easy to assume things are in place until you are confronted by an issue. A periodic review and updating of policies would have been helpful to us.

Our Process

The complaint form provided the school librarian and me with a place to start. The completed form did not identify the group as an organization. Responses on the form indicated that members of the group had not read the books nor did they cite specific complaints about each book. With the help of other library staff members, we began to research the group. We quickly learned that it was a local branch of 9/12-ers following Glenn Beck’s proposals for taking back control of America. The 9/12 group maintained an open website from which we learned their plans to approach all local high schools. We followed public e-mails back to the national organizations that were providing them with direction. Two of those national organizations were anti-LGBT, a circumstance that explained why the three books in question were chosen. We discovered members of the 9/12 group were working behind the scenes to influence some of the individual board members.

With the help of the district’s law firm, we started a thorough search of the law and found guidance about what could be challenged, who could or couldn’t challenge, and who was responsible for deciding local norms and values. For example, it became clear that challenges could not be made for political reasons, and it appeared that the 9/12 organization met the definition of being a political group with a political agenda. We researched all three books, gathering reviews and other information. Everything we learned was placed into files.

At the next board meeting, the school board approved my recommendation to form a committee to do a thorough review of the books and report back to the school board. A committee of seven represented all stakeholders, including a member of the 9/12 group. Sufficient books for all committee members to read were borrowed from local libraries. We gave each committee member a binder, two inches thick, containing the material we gathered as described above. The binders were also shared with other local librarians. The committee discussions covered a variety of opinions, which people shared in a professional manner. The committee completed an honest review that met legal requirements and eliminated further public posturing. The recommendation to the school board was to remove one of the three books, which the board approved with little further controversy.

Conclusion

I believe we accomplished a great deal by following our process. Books about the LGBT experience as a young adult are still in the library and available to all students. Our research prepared other local schools for possible challenges by the group. The ACLU did not challenge the removal of the third book. Politics and emotions were replaced with an informed base of knowledge. As a general practice, I met regularly with a select group of students about controversies affecting the school. Meeting with the students usually left me impressed with their ability to see things with a unique perspective. A student said during the “challenge” discussion, “You know this is much ado about nothing. It is easy to get a copy of any book we want to read.”

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Intellectual Freedom Put to the Test

Is it possible for politics to coexist peacefully with intellectual freedom? More to the point, can a comic book survive the clash of social, political, and moral tastes among members of an elected school board? The answer is yes, but not without a lot of discussion, research, and education.

The school year had just begun. Working its way up from one of our middle schools was a complaint from a parent about a book brought home by her sixth-grade son. She’d talked to the school librarian and the school principal about her concerns but wasn’t satisfied. She was advised that the next step was to submit a written request for reconsideration of library materials to our educational specialist for library services. *Simpsons Comics Belly Buster* by Matt Groening, in this mom’s opinion, had no redeeming qualities; it was crude overall, not age appropriate, and might encourage young people to drink, be violent, and use poor judgment. Assigned to our library materials review committee, this graphic novel was to be read and reviewed by a panel of selected parents, administrators, teachers, and school librarians. I served as the designated school board member.

It is one thing to understand the principle of intellectual freedom and quite another to be put to the test. The first obstacle I had to overcome was my distaste for *The Simpsons* in general. Through committee discussion, I was surprised to learn that the series had won dozens of awards, but more importantly, I was reminded that the book was satirical and served to spur discussions on many aspects of the human condition. Because of the range of maturity levels at middle school, the book also provided an excellent opportunity to encourage reluctant readers to learn to think critically.

When our complainant addressed the committee, she demanded that the book be pulled from school library shelves, asked that the person responsible for approving the book be chastised, and stated her disgust that her tax dollars had gone to purchase “this trash.” In response to her concerns, committee members patiently and objectively discussed freedom of choice and indicated that...
It was a parent’s right to determine what was appropriate for his or her own child. When gently asked if she felt that children actually would try to act out what they had read, the parent grudgingly shared that “most children do know this is wrong; I mean, of course they do.” In the end, the committee’s recommendation to the superintendent was to keep the book on the school library shelves.

Concurring with the committee’s decision, the superintendent placed the recommendation on the docket for the next school board meeting. When the item came up for discussion and vote, our educational specialist for library services got up and began to explain that the book under consideration was a graphic novel, meaning that it was done in a comic-strip format. Before she could complete her explanation, one school board member exclaimed, “Well, you’re right there. It certainly is graphic, and in the wrong way!” What followed was a cacophony of complaints motivated primarily by the board members’ disagreement with the ideas presented in the book because they found them personally offensive. The board seemed determined to go against the committee’s decision and direct that the book be pulled from library shelves, despite counterpoint arguments from our library specialist and me. Finally, our school board attorney asked that the board delay its decision until the next meeting to allow her time to provide the board with additional information.

At this time, the school board consisted of several members who had not yet dealt with a challenged book. Because our meetings are recorded, all comments made are accessible. Our attorney took these things into consideration, and she provided the board with an excellent overview of a relevant United States Supreme Court decision, *Board of Education v. Pico* (1982). She pointed out that while the board members have the right to determine educational suitability, they do not have the right to deny access based on disagreement with the ideas in the book. She felt that the comments already on record plus the recommendation of the committee to retain the book would expose the board to a constitutional challenge should the final decision be to remove the book.

At the next meeting, the board upheld the committee’s decision.

Politicians (and that is what school board members are) strive to keep their constituents happy and appeal to their base. They want to be re-elected or re-appointed. They sometimes come with an agenda that has little to do with rationality. They often get swept up in the emotions of the moment and do not think long-term. When they say, “Reasonable people would agree…,” often they are about to insert whatever it is that they, personally, find objectionable. They may be prone to making inappropriate decisions.
What Is a School Librarian to Do?

The first lines of defense are a well-written policy and thorough guidelines for selection of library materials and reconsideration of challenged materials. Choose your review committee members carefully and educate them well. Members who have not read the Library Bill of Rights or who do not understand the concept of intellectual freedom will be liabilities. Tread very carefully on the slippery slope of requiring parental notification about potentially controversial materials. This requirement may become a form of subjective censorship that likely will result in unequal application of the policy and also may discourage the use of valuable educational materials. Remember that parents have the absolute right to choose materials appropriate for their own child, but not what is appropriate for all children.

With knowledge, tact, skill, and preparation, you can ensure that politics and intellectual freedom remain on friendly terms.

Linda L. McBride
served two terms (2004–2011) as an elected school board member for Henrico County (VA) Public Schools. She is a friend of the Virginia Association of School Librarians. She received the Award of Distinction from the Virginia School Boards Association Academy, the Virginia State PTA President’s Honor Award, and Virginia State PTA Honorary Life Membership.

Work Cited:
LABELING AND RATING SYSTEMS:
GREATER ACCESS OR CENSORSHIP?

From: M. Martin
How well versed are school librarians on issues related to labeling and rating systems? Librarians must recognize the difference between using labels to create interest in books and implementing labeling and rating systems that restrict or discourage wide-ranging reading. When labeling and rating systems are put under a microscope, First Amendment issues that threaten students’ intellectual freedom are exposed.

Motivations for labeling come in many forms. Sometimes labeling is an attempt to help students more easily find materials. Other times it is a reaction to material perceived as offensive or to mandates from administrators. Some labeling and ratings systems evolve from an earnest attempt to assist students attain higher academic achievement and reading fluency. Misunderstanding the impact of prejudicial labeling or ranking systems creates sticky situations in which the library—or librarian—is seen to be advocating the ideas found in the collection, when the fact is “the presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their content by the library” (ALA 2015a). Labeling and rating systems may give the impression that the library endorses and favors specific material over other ideas and concepts.

**Viewpoint-Neutral Directional Labeling**

Melvil Dewey invented the Dewey Decimal Classification system in the early 1870s. His system of cataloging materials created a structure for librarians to organize and access materials. Ever since then, the concept of categorizing items for ease of access is a hallmark of librarianship (OCLC 2015). School librarians continue to design and implement resource location schemes to assist patrons. This type of viewpoint-neutral directional labeling is acceptable because it is a convenience designed to save time and not an attempt to prejudice or influence readers, or discourage access to materials.

Examples of viewpoint-neutral labeling include placing stickers on science fiction, mystery, fantasy, historical fiction, and other genre books. Although there may be some disagreement as to whether a book falls entirely into one genre, these labels do not suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement. The challenge with viewpoint-neutral labeling? “When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal

When labeling and rating systems are put under a microscope, it exposes First Amendment issues that threaten students’ intellectual freedom.
Placing AR or Lexile labels on books sidetracks student reading by leading students to materials that encourage reading of words rather than finding books of literary quality and student interest.

endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling” (ALA 2015a). A symbol on a book indicating Christian fiction falls into the murky area of endorsing Christian religions over other faiths. Being inclusive is essential when placing genre labels on materials. Therefore, discard the Christian designation and create a genre such as “inspirational” to encompass all faiths (ALA 2010).

Be cautious about including in your online public access catalog information generated from outside rating and labeling entities. The challenge occurs when either Machine Readable Cataloging (MARC) or Resource Description and Access (RDA) records are provided. School librarians often accept these records because they provide the maximum descriptive information available. Note that cataloging guidelines do not require librarians to provide rating or labeling information. If libraries choose to use this information, “they should cite the source of the rating to their catalog or discovery tool display indicating that the library does not endorse any external rating system” (ALA 2015b).

**Viewpoint or Prejudicial Labeling**

Labeling that is not directional is called viewpoint labeling and may be prejudicial. Viewpoint labeling is in conflict with the Library Bill of Rights and students’ right to information because it is designed to restrict access based on a value judgment that the content, language, themes, or views of the author of the resource are appropriate or inappropriate. Prejudicial labeling is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users from accessing material or to place materials in restricted
locations where students must depend on staff to access it (ALA 2015a).

Private and Commercial Rating Systems

Ratings systems often bias or prejudice attitudes and decisions about materials. Whether it is the Film Ratings System (CARA), Common Sense Media, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, bookalachi, or Focus on the Family, all seek to provide content ratings that influence a reader’s viewpoint for or against the material.

According to its website, Common Sense Media publishes “independent ratings and reviews for nearly everything kids want to watch, read, play, and learn.” Although Common Sense Media states that the reviews are unbiased and developed by expert reviewers, it is difficult to find out who rates their books, what the reviewers’ credentials are, and how Common Sense Media can claim that the reviews are unbiased. Pat Scales, in her article “Weighing In: Three Bombs, Two Lips, and a Martini Glass,” explains how Common Sense Media’s rating system is doing a disservice to students, provides tools for censorship, and encourages looking at topics in materials out of context (2010).

Rating systems provide misplaced confidence if used in collection development. Rating systems assume that individuals or groups have the ability and authority to determine what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. The rater’s opinion is based on standards about whether language or scenes of violence are suitable or not. But to whom is something unsuitable? And what or whose standards are being used? Ratings systems accept that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about ideas they examine. The creation and publication of material ratings is a perfect example of the First Amendment’s right of free speech. “The adoption, enforcement, or endorsement, either explicitly or implicitly, of any of these rating systems by a library violates the Library Bill of Rights and may be unconstitutional” (ALA 2015b).

Readability Rating Labels

As librarians we are charged with making professional decisions to purchase materials covering a wide variety of views about a particular topic (ALA 2015a). Selection policies that mandate “providing materials on opposing sides of controversial issues in order that young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical analysis of all media” and require selection of high-quality materials that “place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice” assure an inclusive collection suitable for library users (HCPS 2012).

If a book is purchased as a result of a readability rating system, such as the one provided by Renaissance Learning’s Accelerated Reading (AR) program or by MetaMetrics, the company that provides Lexile measures, the librarian must also consider the interest and comprehension level of the material. As explained on the MetaMetrics website, “The Grapes of Wrath” is a fairly simple book to read but may have a theme that is inappropriate for a certain age group” (2015). Lexile measures and AR scores may indicate a student can read the words in the material, but they do not necessarily mean that students will understand the context of the story or information. Although readability is one selection indicator used by librarians, collection choices must reflect age-appropriateness, interest, and book quality. Placing AR or Lexile labels on books sidetracks student reading by leading students to materials that encourage reading of words rather than finding books of literary quality and student interest.

Readability labels pose a bullying risk when students carry books that identify their reading levels. Often low-performing readers come to mind when we think about bullying, but all students, including those identified as gifted, are at risk for being bullied when the book and consequently the student are marked with a reading-level label. “Bullying can threaten students’ physical and emotional safety at school and negatively impact their ability to learn” (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services n.d.).

Conclusion

Labeling and ratings systems create challenges that determine how well the librarian succeeds in dodging censorship issues and providing access. School librarians should know that viewpoint labeling and rating systems that restrict access or interfere with developing a diverse and quality collection are powerful tools undermining students’ right to read. Labeling materials based on a biased rating or readability score is censorship.

Librarians believe in the premise that balanced, open access to information is a student’s right. Recognize the difference between assisting access with directional labeling and denying rightful access to resources through viewpoint labeling. Most of all, avoid collection-development
selections based on judgments about content, language, themes, or views about the creator of the material. Refrain from labeling materials with a readability score. Stay on the side of ALA’s Library Bill of Rights and the First Amendment.

Ann M. Martin is a former educational specialist for library services at Virginia’s Henrico County Public Schools. She is a member of AASL and the AASL Publications and Advisory Group. She serves as the liaison to the Freedom to Read Foundation and is also a member of ALA BARC (Budget Analysis and Review Committee). She was awarded the 2015 AASL Distinguished Service Award. She coauthored (with Suzanna L. Panter) the March/April 2015 KQ article “The Paradox of Our Profession” and coauthored (with Kathleen R. Roberts) the January/February 2015 Principal article “Digital Native Does Not Equal Digital Literacy.” She also wrote the book Empowering Leadership: Developing Behaviors for Success (AASL 2015). She is a past president of AASL.

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FILTERING BEYOND CIPA: CONSEQUENCES OF AND ALTERNATIVES TO OVERFILTERING IN SCHOOLS

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Internet filtering is a routine practice in public schools and libraries. The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) does not require that all schools and libraries install filters, only those that accept certain types of federal funds or discounts for the provision of Internet access. Although CIPA grants these institutions the flexibility to develop filtering policies appropriate to their communities, many institutions are filtering well beyond the requirements of the law. Schools, in particular, do not limit filtering to visual images as the law mandates, and routinely block access to broad swaths of information that all users are entitled to view (Chmara 2010). Increasingly, schools block access to entire social-media and social-networking sites and to any websites that are interactive or collaborative, such as blogs or wikis (AASL 2012). They also rely (mistakenly) on filtering to deal with issues of hacking, copyright infringement, and cyberbullying, denying access to certain websites and technologies.

The American Library Association’s Office for Information Technology Policy and Office for Intellectual Freedom, with support from Google, Inc., recently conducted a study to investigate, in part, the broader impact of CIPA on achieving educational and social objectives for the twenty-first century. Drawing on extensive research, interviews, and input from over thirty experts and practitioners, the study Fencing Out Knowledge: Impacts of the Children’s Internet Protection Act 10 Years Later identified an overreach in the implementation of CIPA. This overreach restricts access to information and learning opportunities for students, and disproportionately impacts those without a home broadband connection or smartphone. This article summarizes the main findings from the report and four recommendations for actions the ALA should undertake to help schools and libraries align filtering practices with the requirements of the law.

Factors Contributing to the Overimplementation of CIPA

CIPA requires schools and libraries that accept federal funds or discounts for the provision of Internet access to use software filters to block access to visual images deemed “obscene,” “child pornography,” or “harmful to minors” (CIPA 2000). Despite the narrow mandate of the law and the risk of legal challenges for blocking legitimate content, implementation of CIPA is often subject to overreaction, myth, and fear. Misperceptions abound that institutions will lose all their federal funding if they do not filter as much as possible, or that school and library officials will face criminal charges for failing to filter Web content to the fullest possible extent (Galdwell-Stone 2013).

Technical limitations also contribute to overfiltering. While filtering software today is more sophisticated than in the past and offers additional
Filtering beyond CIPA’s requirements results in missed opportunities to prepare students to be responsible users, consumers, and producers of online content and resources.

control in selecting the content to be filtered (Ayre 2004), filters are still unable to accurately identify obscene images. With the growth of online content generated by users, this limitation has made filtering even more challenging (Deloitte 2008). On average, software filters overblock legitimate content or underblock sexually explicit content approximately 15 to 20 percent of the time (Houghton-Jan 2010). This accuracy rate, however, pertains only to the filtering of text content, not visual images. More than a decade after the Supreme Court upheld CIPA, filters still are not able to perform the tasks required by the law. Additionally, as multiple stakeholders are involved in or affected by Internet filtering decisions, perspectives on filtering frequently differ, resulting in wide variations in the filtered environments. For example, despite the low number of actual incidents reported by parents and students, administrators tend to believe that negative experiences with social networking occurred more frequently than indicated by the reported numbers (NSBA 2007). The influence of other stakeholders, such as technology directors, on the implementation of filters is seldom examined. In addition to overseeing and procuring Internet filters, technology directors also may assume much of the responsibility for implementing filtering policies (Fuchs 2012). On the other hand, the potential contributions of school librarians are often overlooked—even though they are highly informed in areas of student learning, teacher training, and digital-literacy instruction (ALA 2013). More than stewards of print, digital, and technology resources, librarians bring to bear a different perspective than information technology specialists, as librarians facilitate the use of resources by students, teachers, and the broader public.
I’M BEING REQUIRED TO INSTALL AN INTERNET FILTER. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

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Following are steps you can take to minimize the negative impact of filters. With or without the use of filters, schools and libraries should implement a good education and communication program that informs users about effective searching, identity protection, and managing access to unwanted materials.

1. Exercise care in choosing filtering software. Urge your district to select software that is transparent in its classification system and that allows the school to fine-tune the categories of blocked content. Ensure that people, not automated algorithms, regularly review and analyze the software’s blocking criteria. Be aware that some vendors are affiliated with religious organizations or espouse partisan or doctrinal views. Favor vendors who do not design their software to advance their own values. Be sure that the school can switch off or opt out of viewpoint- or content-based blocking criteria that may run afoul of the First Amendment. Especially important is the use of accurate categories for illegal content such as obscenity or child pornography. Broad categories such as “pornography,” which is not defined by law and is interpreted in many different ways, may sweep up much constitutionally protected material and should be avoided.

2. Exercise care in installing and maintaining the software. Adjust blacklist criteria to minimize the blocking of constitutionally protected speech. Establish a clear, transparent, and timely process for reviewing and revising blocking criteria as requested by users, and for unblocking constitutionally protected content school-wide. Keep track of instances where filters have interfered with teachers’ ability to teach and students’ ability to learn so that you can justify necessary adjustments to the blocking criteria.

3. Develop a well-crafted policy for responsible Internet use. Ensure that guidelines, rules, and procedures are reasonable, nondiscriminatory, viewpoint-neutral restrictions on Internet access and computer use. Once adopted, all staff and students should be trained in appropriate implementation. The policy should advise Internet users of their rights and responsibilities and should describe unacceptable behaviors, the penalties for violations, and how to appeal a decision imposing a penalty.

4. Implement a program to educate students about online behavior. The Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, a statutory amendment to the Children’s Internet Protection Act, requires schools that receive E-Rate money to educate students about appropriate online behavior. Your program should cover interacting with other individuals on social-networking websites and in chat rooms, and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Educational and Social Consequences of Overfiltering

Filtering beyond CIPA’s requirements results in missed opportunities to prepare students to be responsible users, consumers, and producers of online content and resources. Some school districts block access to content deemed “controversial, inappropriate, or time wasting” (ACLU 2013). Others block websites about foreign countries, such as China and Iran, or biology websites that are used in Advanced Placement curricula. Excessive filtering has the unintended consequence of curtailing research and creating barriers to learning.

By impeding the interactive process of social learning, blocking access to interactive websites and platforms impacts not only what teachers can teach but also how they teach. Restricting access in schools leaves youth on their own to use these sites outside of the classroom instead of engaging them in the use of these tools in a supportive school environment. Overblocking in schools limits students’ perspectives on shaping their online presence and understanding the extent and permanence of their digital footprint, leaving students at a disadvantage when employers and colleges examine their online profiles. Overfiltering also has social consequences for students because educators cannot help students navigate ethical choices about online interactions (Gardner et al. 2011).

Findings from the ALA study confirm an early concern that CIPA would create two classes of students: an advantaged class with unfiltered Internet access at home and a disadvantaged class with only filtered access at school.

Findings from the ALA study confirm an early concern that CIPA would create two classes of students: an advantaged class with unfiltered Internet access at home and a disadvantaged class with only filtered access at school (McCarthy 2004). Moreover, while some students
benefit from responsible-use policies with guided instruction and experimentation with digital content and platforms, others are denied those educational opportunities. Overfiltering content effectively limits the acquisition of the digital-literacy skills required to participate fully in a globally competitive and democratic 21st-century society (Hobbs 2010). The ALA study also recognizes the role of school librarians in overcoming challenges to digital literacy and increasing the capacity of educators to integrate technology into learning tasks and curriculum in the classroom (ALA 2013).

**Recommendations**

This report offers four recommendations to align current practices with the requirements of the law. The ALA should:

1. Through education and awareness campaigns, increase awareness of the spectrum of filtering choices and exactly what the law requires.

2. Develop a toolkit for school leaders to help realign filtering and Internet access policies.

3. Create a digital repository of materials to house existing research, surveys, and case studies on Internet filtering. Other types of information to collect include anecdotes and best practices from librarians as well as examples of responsible-use policies and digital-literacy lesson plans.

4. Conduct long- and short-term research to explore the educational use of social media and other digital tools to support learning. Research also should assess the impact of filtering on student learning and achievement.

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**BANNED WEBSITES AWARENESS DAY**

Michelle Luhtala  
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AASL designates the Wednesday of Banned Books Week as Banned Websites Awareness Day (BWAD). By embedding the event in the American Library Association’s long-standing censorship-awareness campaign, BWAD formally directs national attention to Internet filtering’s impact on teaching and learning. BWAD aims to promote dialog among educators about digital citizenship. Teaching students to navigate the Web critically and to develop a personal cognitive Internet filter empowers them to take charge of their own learning and builds their decision-making capacity.

School librarians are encouraged to involve their learning communities in observing BWAD. For example, in Silver Creek, Colorado, students participated in a graffiti debate, wrestling with the delineation between constructive and obstructive filtering. In New York City, students sent letters of protest to their board of education members pleading for more access to Web content. In New Trier, Illinois, students conducted surveys of the student body about filtering. In New Canaan, Connecticut, where students have open access to much of the Web, access to Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter was blocked for six hours to show solidarity for students trying to learn in more restricted environments.

Just as lists of commonly banned books help promote Banned Books Week, lists featuring blocked sites fuel conversation. In observance of Banned Websites Awareness Day 2015 (September 30), readers are invited to contribute to a crowd-sourced list of blocked sites. Just as lists of commonly banned books help promote Banned Books Week, lists featuring blocked sites fuel conversation. In observance of Banned Websites Awareness Day 2015 (September 30), readers are invited to contribute to a crowd-sourced list of blocked sites. The list can be accessed at [http://bit.ly/aaslbwadlist](http://bit.ly/aaslbwadlist), which is linked to the QR code.

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New Internet Filtering Interpretation Approved by ALA Council

On June 30, 2015 the ALA Council approved “Internet Filtering: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.” The new interpretation was created by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee, and it took a year for the committee to complete the document. The interpretation is located at <www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/internet-filtering/>.

The full text of the report, including the four recommendations, is available free at <http://connect.ala.org/files/cipa_report.pdf>.

More than a decade ago, Internet filters appeared to be a simple way to ensure an age-appropriate learning environment. Today, it is critical to recognize the unequal and uneven impact of filters’ implementation. Because Internet users are not only consumers but also creators of content, Internet filters and access policies must be realigned with the dynamic, interactive, and social uses of the Internet if all students are to benefit fully from the technological opportunities available today and in the future. This realignment will require less blocking of online content and platforms and more digital-literacy instruction to protect and empower students both online and offline.

School librarians are key to overcoming the challenges of digital literacy. They are well positioned to shape curricula to accompany changes in Internet access policy and to help students acquire the digital-literacy skills they need to be college- and career-ready and to participate fully in today’s society.

Works Cited:


Kristen R. Batch is a consultant for the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy in Washington, DC. She authored the ALA report Fencing Out Knowledge: Impacts of the Children’s Internet Protection Act 10 Years Later. At Internews, an international media development organization, she served as lead program officer for a global program to address issues of Internet censorship. Previously, she coordinated research and teams of experts to develop guidance on a broad range of technology policy issues for the National Research Council’s Computer Science and Telecommunications Board.
Students rely on school librarians to protect their right to read. We stealthily deliver graphic novels to them in the hallways. We make sure there are no spine labels that reveal reading levels. We put poetry magazines in manila envelopes to shield students from bullies. As school librarians, we protect our students from censorship and go above and beyond to honor their reading choices. We must also protect their library records. It’s not just the ethical thing to do, it’s the law.

In his 2007 article “How Does the Family Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA] Affect You” Thomas V. Toglia explained that, under the law, student records can be disclosed to third parties only with authorization from a parent if the student is under the age of eighteen (2007, 61). Although library records are not explicitly discussed in the act, they are not listed in the exemptions. Therefore, it is common practice to include library records in the definition of student records (Adams 2005). What should school librarians do when local law enforcement wants to take a peek?

Playing Detective
On my way into school one beautiful spring morning, I was intercepted by our school secretary. “Guess what? We just got a phone call, and we get to play detective to help solve a real crime,” she said. One of our school library books was found at the scene of a crime in a neighboring county. The police provided her with a barcode number and wanted me to look up who had checked out the book. She was very excited—like we were on an episode of Law and Order, and I was going to have the information that would crack the case wide open.
I took the barcode number back to my office and thought, “This is not right. I don’t think I can or want to do this.” I remembered vaguely from library school that library records were to be protected, but I was not confident about school library records. I looked up the American Library Association’s “Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records.” It stated that “circulation records and other records identifying the names of library users [are] to be confidential…such records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government except pursuant to such process, order or subpoena” (ALA 1986). The American Association of School Librarians “Position Statement on the Confidentiality of Library Records” stated that “The library community recognizes that children and youth have the same rights to privacy as adults” (AASL 2012).

Armed with this information, I refused to call the detective back and, instead, called my library supervisor at our district office. I told her I didn’t know what legal obligation I was under to disclose the identity of the student. My instinct was to do nothing. I didn’t even look up the information for curiosity’s sake in case I had to go to court. She blessed my actions and told me to sit tight while she discussed the matter with our district lawyers.

Civic Duty vs. Ethical Duty
A few hours later my principal came to see me. She explained she had just spoken with the detective and wanted to know if I had looked up the information yet. I told her I called my library supervisor because I didn’t think I had the right to give away this information. She was perplexed and believed it was my civic duty to help the police. I explained to her it was my ethical duty as a librarian to protect my students’ privacy rights. She decided not to worry about it and wait until I received direction from my library supervisor.

Later in the day, my supervisor called to say she had spoken with the district lawyers and they said not to disclose the student records until a subpoena was shown. To comply with FERPA, it is our county policy to disclose student records only with the parents’ authorization (HCPS n.d.).
The Shakedown
Days went by, and I heard nothing. Then, our school resource officer asked to speak with me. I had known this officer for a few years, and we had a nice working relationship. Imagine my surprise when this conversation turned into an interrogation about why I couldn’t look up the information for him. I explained that I was instructed by our lawyers not to disclose the records without a subpoena. He asked what made library records so “sacred.” As a school resource officer, he had access to all students’ directory data, and all he needed was the name of the student who had checked out the book, and he would be able to trace the parent. I indicated that library records do not belong to my school and said he could go to the district office with a subpoena, and anyone there could access the records. He insisted I should comply with his request. I refused again, explaining that if a subpoena were to arrive, I would need to fax it to our lawyers for verification.

The Subpoena Is Served
A few days later a group of detectives arrived at my school with the county police. They presented me with a subpoena and asked that I look up the checkout record. I faxed the subpoena to our lawyers for approval. They looked it over and instructed me to give the police only the name of the student. I gave them the information and never heard from them again.

Protecting Privacy in Practice
When I became district library supervisor, one of my first changes to our handbook was adding a section on student privacy. We ensured it clearly stated that student library records should be kept confidential and librarians should notify our district office if anyone other than the parent asks for them. We also made sure our circulation system did not keep checkout records past one previous user, and we strengthened our circulation polices to eliminate peer checkout practices.

Conclusion
Sometimes members of law enforcement feel they are entitled to information, and librarians can feel pressure from their school communities to comply. I was fortunate enough to be in a large district with a school library supervisor who could work with our legal department on my behalf. Although the chances of being prosecuted under FERPA may be slim (McDonald 2008), as servants of our school community and protectors of our students’ rights, it is the ethical duty of school librarians to champion student privacy and resist threats to it.

Works Cited:


Privacy Resources:


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RETHINKING THE “RESTRICTED” SHELF

It’s the whispering and giggling that tips you off, and the growing circle of students gathering around a book or computer screen. They’ve discovered something, all right, and it’s probably not just a funny cat video or a particularly fascinating diagram of a medieval castle.

Maybe it’s a book about puberty, or an art book with a few nude paintings. Maybe it’s a book about a family with two moms, or a novel with four-letter words. It might be a title about drugs, violence, gangs, or graffiti. Maybe it’s just a sensitive topic—dealing with death, mental illness, or abuse, for example. Last year at one of my junior high schools it was an unabridged dictionary that defined the F word (hey, my students know how to find words in a print dictionary, not just on Dictionary.com—I was impressed).

It’s tempting to put all of our potentially controversial titles behind the circulation desk, on the “professional” shelf, or in the counseling office. We figure that students who need them can always ask, and it eliminates all that giggling. But the truth is, with that barrier to access, those books are now essentially off limits to students. The reader who might browse books on sexual identity if they are on the regular shelves is far less likely to walk up to the circulation desk and request them.

It also sends a message that there’s something wrong or inappropriate about the topics covered by those restricted books. Yet we want our collections to embrace diverse groups of people and broad points of view. If we pulled out every book that might make someone uncomfortable, the shelves behind the desk would grow by leaps and bounds.

This might be a good time to take a look at the books we keep behind the desk, in the professional collection or otherwise, and rethink our reasons. If it’s really a resource primarily for teachers, fine. But if those titles are segregated from the regular collection so that we can shield ourselves from difficult conversations, maybe it’s time to put them back where they belong.

If you haven’t had a chance to look at the Top Ten Most Frequently Challenged Books for 2014, you’ll find it at <http://www.oif.ala.org/oif/?p=5390>. The American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom released the list in April. Many prominent news outlets, including CNN and the Washington Post, reported on the list.

It’s interesting to note that eight of the ten books “reflect diverse authors and cultural content”—ranging from the Native American main character in Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian to the penguin with two dads in And Tango Makes Three. Author Malinda Lo, who analyzed the makeup of the books on the challenged lists for the past 15 years, noted in a blog post (<www.diversityina.com/2014/09/book-challenges-suppress-diversity/> that “diversity is actually under attack. Minority perspectives are being silenced every year.” Where do you want your library to fit into this issue? I invite you to consider how you can act in opposition to this attack, and choose to support diverse voices instead.

Miranda Doyle is OASL’s Intellectual Freedom Chair and the librarian for Lake Oswego School District.

As a teenager, she may have stealthily read a few books located in the 613s—books she was way too embarrassed to actually check out. Miranda has an MLIS from San Jose State University and is National Board Certified in Library Media.
Equitable access to educational and technology resources is essential for all school districts. One-to-one computing has been at the forefront in K–12 education for years, and the idea of providing each student with a district-owned electronic device for academic use is rapidly becoming more popular. Educators are seeing the rapid transition from tangible curricular resources, such as print textbooks, to electronic resources. Districts no longer question moving to a one-to-one environment; instead they are contemplating how to best make the move. We must remember that technology use should not be about the device but, ultimately, what that device allows students to achieve. If we focus solely on the device rather than study instructional practices, resources will be wasted and students will miss out on learning opportunities. Districts need to ensure teachers are ready to take advantage of individual student technology in their classrooms and that the curriculum supports its use.

Quakertown Community School District (QCSD) currently begins its one-to-one program in ninth grade. Bring your own device (BYOD) is also a viable option for districts to consider. In Quakertown we have chosen to use a hybrid solution of district-provided laptops as well as allowing BYOD if our students choose. At QCSD we want to allow choice for our students and support their use of the devices they feel most comfortable with. QCSD currently sees about a 15 percent adoption rate of BYOD in our high school. Since QCSD provides a low-cost district solution to students, most of them choose to use the district-provided laptop, which they get to keep 24/7. QCSD does, however, see a slightly higher BYOD adoption rate amongst our teachers and in lower grade levels. Many students choose to use their smartphones or tablets in elementary and middle schools where a district device is not available to take home.

Financially, BYOD always sounds like a great solution because the hardware and software costs no longer fall on the district; however, there are obstacles and less-obvious costs even with a partial BYOD initiative. Capable infrastructure and internal district resources are two top concerns that immediately come to mind. For example, who will support these personal devices if students have problems using them for classwork?

One of the components for the success of our one-to-one program has been our integrating the school librarian and libraries in all aspects of the implementation.

School Librarians: Key to Technology Integration

Joseph Kuzo | jkuzo@qcisd.org
An increasing number of devices are coming into our schools each day regardless of whether or not we support the devices. We must ensure that our networks can support and provide a good experience for our growing number of users relying on their own devices. Districts will have little to no control over personal devices, so we must be careful what access they have to our networks. Acceptable-use policies should also be reviewed to ensure personal devices are included. Printing, file sharing, and other issues must be considered for effective BYOD support.

Google Apps for Education has made this transition much simpler over the years. Teachers and students can now simply share files rather than print out assignments. QCSD students have access to Gmail to stay in constant contact with their teachers. We have set up student print stations in our high-school library to allow students to print necessary items. Access to electronic transfer of files has reduced printing throughout the district.

What has worked for us? As previously mentioned, we have implemented a hybrid solution. QCSD established a one-to-one program that offers a district-provided laptop (for a small fee) each year to students in grades 9–12 who choose to go this route. QCSD also encourages and supports all personally owned devices for both students and staff in grades K–12. This system has ensured that our 9–12 students will all have a computer (district-owned or personally owned), and teachers can plan lessons accordingly, knowing that electronic access will be available.

One of the components for the success of our one-to-one program has been our integrating the school librarian and libraries in all aspects of the implementation. The high-school librarian, Becki Kelly, was trained as a technology-integration coach and played an integral role in building professional development around the first-year integration of technology. Working with the principal, director of technology, and department heads, she developed a two-day summer institute that addressed both the device-related concerns of teachers, such as how to manage multiple devices in the classrooms, as well as the pedagogical needs of curriculum as teachers looked at moving their content online.

During that first year of implementation, the freshman center library became the hub of the one-to-one movement. A technology associate spent part of his day in the library to provide technical assistance, and the school librarian worked at building access to online content and resources for teachers to use in their classrooms. Additionally, the school librarian collaborated with teachers to offer instruction on Internet safety, appropriate use of copyrighted materials, and assessment of the validity of sources, while also working with outside agencies such as the public library, police department, chamber of commerce, and district attorney’s office to make the community aware of what students could now access online 24/7, and the importance of parents’ being part of a child’s online presence. This collaboration helped to build community support for what was

Using school librarians as ground support of a one-to-one or other technology implementation has many desirable outcomes.
being done in the district, and built awareness for what students were now able to share as part of their 21st-century education.

Using school librarians as ground support of a one-to-one or other technology implementation has many desirable outcomes. First, there is an individual in the school who can support students and teachers as they plan and then move into a blended environment. In general, one of the loudest complaints about technology integration in schools is that teachers do not feel supported. For Quakertown, having the school library as the hub of the one-to-one/BYOD program offers teachers that support, both physically with the devices and peripherals, and academically when individuals need someone with whom to collaborate.

Secondly, in many districts school librarians are available to students and teachers in grades K–12. As a result, aligning technology use with the curriculum is facilitated because an individual within each building can champion the cause and share promising practices that spread into other buildings within the district. Additionally, school librarians are resource specialists; by extending their role into the one-to-one learning environment, students can be supported in their learning through librarian-led resource instruction. Teachers will have an easier time building online content as they are introduced to varied and exemplary resources. Many librarians also offer professional development as part of their work within schools.

Lastly, librarians have community and professional connections. Because they are connected educators, at the local level school librarians can promote what is being done within the district. Many school librarians participate in professional learning communities outside their districts and collaborate with organizations that share leading-edge technology-integration resources and developments. Therefore, school librarians can share with other educators in their districts up-to-date info about advances made elsewhere and best practices developed in the field. It’s a natural transition for school librarians to support one-to-one technology integration. Quakertown has benefitted from encouraging and educating district librarians to provide frontline support for use of electronic devices and resources. Other districts can also find success empowering librarians in this way.

Joseph Kuzo is the director of technology for Quakertown Community School District. He has been with QCSD since 2001. His goal is to provide access to all students and prepare them for college and careers by providing the necessary technologies of the twenty-first century. Recently, he presented at ISTE 2015 on BYOD and one-to-one. He and his district’s programs have been featured in publications such as Tech & Learning, THE Journal, EdTech, and EdTech Review, and by Aruba Networks. Follow Joe on Twitter @kuzojoe.
I believe human lives depend on intellectual freedom.
Let me explain why.

Books Unchained: The Protective Power of Access to Ideas

Blythe Woolston | Blythettheindexer@gmail.com

When I wrote Black Helicopters, a novel about a teen terrorist, it was important that I expose why the main character, Valley, was willing to become a suicide bomber. She had emotional motivations, but there was another important reason that she was vulnerable to the doctrines of terror—she hadn’t learned to think critically. In the interest of “protecting” his daughter, Valley’s father restricted access to the outside world, including books. Deprived of intellectual freedom, Valley was unprepared to make independent choices in her own best interest.

I believe human lives depend on intellectual freedom. Let me explain why.

Recently, I indexed an important book: The Meaning of the Library: A Cultural History edited by Alice Crawford (Princeton University Press 2015). It charts the human relationship to books—those marvelous inventions that preserve and share ideas. Book production was a huge investment of human labor and time. If you have ever had the pleasure of seeing an illuminated manuscript page you know why. It is little wonder that access to those rare and precious treasures was extremely limited. Books were kept under lock and key, sometimes chained to shelves. During the centuries since, many technological and cultural revolutions have affected
access to books: the printing press, the institution of public libraries, inexpensive paperbacks, and e-publishing. Each of those changes resulted in increased access to books, and, not coincidentally, social changes that moved us toward greater liberty and equality.

What is it about access to books that engenders human freedom? To answer that question, I look to the times in my life when I’ve witnessed attempts to restrict access to books.

The first “censor” I encountered was my mom. I was a precocious reader, crazy for books, and always on the hunt for something to read. I had older sisters who were in high school before I went into first grade. They brought home books! I read the *Red Pony*. No problem. Then it was *The Scarlet Letter*. It was a far more challenging book, and not just because of the vocabulary and sentence structure. I didn’t understand why everyone was so mean to Hester Prynne, so I asked my mother. Her answer was to take the book out of my hands and punish my sister for letting me have it. I was strictly forbidden to read any more “high school” books until I was in high school.

Was my mother wrong to deny me access to books meant for more experienced readers? I’m a mother now myself, and I understand her choice. But banning the books had an unfortunate consequence. Even though little me wasn’t “ready” to read *The Scarlet Letter*, I was ready to argue about justice and kindness. I wanted to have those conversations. Inadvertently, my mother deprived both of us an opportunity to talk and share ideas. Her attempt to protect me from an inappropriate book ended up limiting her own influence. Censorship often has that unfortunate result.

Years later, when I went to university, I studied library science. All of my professors emphasized intellectual freedom as a core value of the profession. We visited the special-collections rooms and saw a copy of that dangerous book, Joyce’s *Ulysses*, along with the box used to smuggle it into the country. At that moment, multiple copies were in the open stacks, and the book was required reading in several literature classes. Times had changed. The government was no longer seizing and burning books, but barriers to access still remained.

I don’t recall any formal challenges to books in the university libraries while I worked there. What I do remember were the books attacked in the stacks: books glued together into unreadable blocks, pages sliced out with razor blades,

To exercise free will, we need practice rejecting some ideas and embracing others.
illustrations blotted out with ink or typing correction fluid. Since the government wasn’t willing to play censor, individuals were taking it into their own hands to protect others from “bad” books. Their actions, I believe, were as well-intentioned as my own mother’s.

I wish I could talk to them and to others who seek to have books removed from classrooms and libraries. I’d like to make a case that we need all sorts of books in our lives—especially as children. To exercise free will, we need practice rejecting some ideas and embracing others. We need books that make us struggle to understand. We need books that contain outmoded language and social standards. We need old books that don’t jibe with current sensibilities because we need to understand that ideas can and do evolve. Without that knowledge, we will be less prepared to think independently and challenge the status quo.

Censors aren’t wrong about the power of ideas, but they are wrong about the way to harness that power. We don’t need to restrict access to ideas; we need to do a better job of sharing our own.

We don’t need to restrict access to ideas; we need to do a better job of sharing our own. Instead of taking the book away, take the time to talk. Our children will grow up in a world awash in information. We need to prepare them to negotiate that world. The best protection against a bad idea—like the doctrine of terror, for example—is access to many other ideas. We can make that happen. At this moment, some of those very manuscripts that were once chained to shelves are being digitized and made accessible to a global audience. We are unchaining the books. We will all be freer for it.

Blythe Woolston is an insatiable reader who found her niche as a back-of-the-book indexer. She also writes novels for young readers—an activity she thinks of as just another way of reading stories. Her debut novel, The Freak Observer (Carolrhoda Books 2010), earned the William C. Morris Debut Award and the 2010 gold medal Moonbeam Children’s Book Award for general YA fiction, and was a PEN Center finalist. Black Helicopters (Candlewick 2013), a novel about suicide terrorism, earned a place on YALSA’s Best Fiction for Young Adults list, is a Montana Book Award Honor Book, and received the 2014 High Plains Book Award for Young Adult Fiction. Her next novel, MARTians, will be published by Candlewick this October.