

## HCLS Materials Selection Policy

### Purpose:

This document articulates the principles, policies, and criteria that guide the staff in selecting, evaluating, and withdrawing items from the HCLS collection (hereinafter "materials"). The goal of this policy is to ensure a responsive and equitable approach to our collection development and management, and to inform the public about this process. The vast and diverse collection of materials in all formats supports HCLS' curriculum and reflects the interests, aspirations, and diversity of our community. Delivering such an extensive, first-rate collection to customers involves selecting, acquiring, organizing, preserving, maintaining, and providing convenient access.

### HCLS Commitment:

HCLS is committed to equity.

- We condemn racism, xenophobia, misogyny, hatred, and racial and gendered violence in all forms against all people. We believe in standing against racism and hatred each time it is in our midst and strategizing and enacting change until America's promises ring true for all people. We believe true and lasting change requires true and lasting intention to learn, grow and act.
- We believe that diversity and inclusion are about respecting, understanding, honoring, and welcoming all members of the community into the library.
- We are committed to maintaining a collection on topics and perspectives that reflect our diverse community and ensuring all community members have equitable access to library resources, services, classes, and events.
- We support and stand committed to the freedom to read, along with the freedom to hear and to view, which is protected by the [First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States](#). We believe in Intellectual freedom as the right of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment. This Intellectual freedom is a core value of the library profession. This freedom, essential to our democracy, will be upheld, supported, and defended in the selection and accessibility of all library materials. In this regard, the library upholds the principles of the American Library Association's [Library Bill of Rights](#), [Freedom to Read](#), [Freedom to View](#), [Statement on Labeling](#), [Free Access to Libraries for Minors](#), and Resolution 1981-32 of the Maryland State Board of Education. In so doing, HCLS does not support specific beliefs or viewpoints. The selection of materials does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content, viewpoint, implications, or presentation of the materials.

### Guiding Principles of Our Commitment:

The guiding principles of HCLS selection is that an educated public is possible only through free access to materials reflecting a variety of ideas, experiences, and opinions. Principles that support and guide the selection and withdrawal of materials from the Library's collection are guided by the following framework:

- The Library is committed to factual, accurate, and current information, fighting all forms of disinformation, censorship, and barriers to free inquiry.
- The Library is a welcoming, inclusive place for every customer and acts to dismantle exclusionary structures including racism, sexism, and xenophobia.
- The Library advances individual and societal goals for equity, inclusion, and social justice to benefit the whole of our community.
- HCLS makes selections based on the interest, information, enlightenment, entertainment, education, development, and enrichment of all community members, within budgetary constraints and availability of materials.
- HCLS makes selection decisions reflective of our community demographics and community interests with the understanding and recognition this may bring various issues and sometimes conflicting and controversial viewpoints that may be unpopular with segments of the public.
- HCLS does not serve *in loco parentis*. It is only the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who may restrict

their children, and only their own children, from access to library materials. Responsibility for children's reading rests with their parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s). Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of children.

- HCLS recognizes laws governing obscenity, subversive materials, and other questionable matters are subject to interpretation by the courts. Consequently, no challenged material will be removed from the library for complaints of obscenity, pornography, subversiveness, or any other category covered by law. Conversely, materials previously judged unlawful will not knowingly be selected.

## **Policy**

1. Materials are selected in appropriate formats to meet customers' informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs. To that end, the selection team strives to ensure that:
  1. Materials meet current demands for general information needs.
  2. Materials reflect the community's diversity of interests, experiences, and opinions.
  3. Materials are continually assessed for condition, currency, relevance, and performance.
  4. Materials support HCLS' curriculum.
2. Selection decisions are made based on selection team judgment, expertise, and knowledge of what currently exists in the collection, and evaluation of reviews and other tools. The selection team may elect not to purchase vanity press and self-published items if the author's credentials are not apparent. Material evaluations are made based on content and quality according to these factors:
  - a) Accuracy
  - b) Authoritativeness of publisher or producer
  - c) Importance of author, artists, or vendor
  - d) Availability of material elsewhere in the area (county, state)
  - e) Budget availability
  - f) Access and ease of use
  - g) Literary merit or artistic quality
  - h) Potential (demand) or known use (popularity) by customers
  - i) Price
  - j) Relationship to other material in the collection and scarcity of material on the subject
  - k) Significance of subject matter, adequate coverage, and value to the collection
  - l) Suitability of format size, paper, print, and binding
  - m) Timeliness
3. An item that meets selection criteria will not be removed from nor sequestered within the Library solely because it represents a particular opinion, belief, or philosophy. Selection of an item does not represent the Library's endorsement of any opinion, belief, philosophy, or precept.
4. Reviewing Tools - Every item added to the collection is vetted and professionally recognized. Reviewing tools are used in the selection process when possible.
5. HCLS welcomes customer requests to add specific materials to the collection. HCLS' selection team thoroughly reviews all such recommendations prior to deciding on whether to add. Decisions are guided by this document, HCLS' mission, and available budget.
6. The ultimate responsibility for selection of materials rests with the President & CEO who may delegate specific authorities and tasks.

## **Formats**

HCLS strives to acquire materials in a variety of formats to support our educational and equitable mission and the community's evolving needs.

## **Unique Collections**

## Materials for Customers with Special Needs

HCLS provides access to a wide range of materials for people with special needs. Customers can borrow adaptive equipment, such as magnifiers. Books in large print are purchased for customers with limited vision. Recent and popular titles, as well as fiction and nonfiction classics, are selected from large print publishers. HCLS does not maintain a collection of talking books and Braille materials, since customers may borrow these materials from the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled.

## World Languages

The world language collection is primarily a popular reading collection for speakers of languages other than English and students who wish to practice their world language skills. Languages maintained and added reflect community needs and requests, particularly from world language readers and community partners. The collection includes fiction and nonfiction.

## DIY Collection

Materials in this collection are selected to support the DIY Education Center's commitment to promote experimental and creative hands-on learning.

Safety, quality, reliability, brand reputation, after-sale service, and price are key selection criteria besides collection fitness. The tools collection features three types of items:

- Individual items – examples: 8' step ladder; studfinder; 6"x3" round cake pan
- Sets – a grouping of items purchased together, grouped by the vendor or manufacturer, and loaned together (e.g., bike repair set, wrench set)
- Kits – a grouping of individual items purchased separately, grouped by HCLS, and loaned together

## Art Education Collection

The scope of the collection is limited to visual art and sculptures. Just like art books (print or digital) in the main collection, the selection of physical artworks is guided by the following:

- Historical Impact
- Content or Contextual Diversity
- Artistic Influence and Professional Reviews
- Genre
- Anticipated Community Response
- Connection to Curriculum
- Decorating Trends

## Educational Toy Collection

This collection of educational toys, puzzles and puppets are selected to promote early learning and to enhance the social, cognitive, and motor skills of children, from infants through age four. Toys are selected based on safety, sturdiness of construction, developmental appropriateness, and suitability for borrowing.

## Laptops and Hotspots Collection

Materials in this collection are selected to support the commitment to provide equitable and reliable access to technology and wi-fi to our community and Project Literacy's curriculum. Selections of materials in this collection reflect cost effectiveness, durability, ease of use, and reliability. This collection features three loan options: laptop and hotspot sets, laptop [individual] and hotspot [individual].

## Video Game Collection

This collection of video games includes a selection of games for Xbox, Nintendo Switch, and PlayStation 4 and 5. Games are rated E, E10+, and T. This collection is available at all branches and can be returned to any branch. Video games can be borrowed by all ages, with parents taking responsibility.

## STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) Activity and Literacy Kits Collection

The scope of the collection is limited to STEAM and literacy hands-on activities combined with a STEAM

or literacy theme and designed for independent educational value. Like other collections, selection of this collection is guided by the following:

- Originality and application to approved national science or literature educational standards
- Variability to exercises to meet the needs of a wide range of customers within the age range
- Durability and safety of the contents
- Price and availability
- Connection to curriculum

### **Howard County Author Collection**

At HCLS, we recognize local literary and creative efforts, and provide Howard County authors with the opportunity to share their work with other county residents through the Howard County Author Collection. For a title to be included in the Howard County Author Collection, the author must currently reside or work in Howard County, and the author must be willing to donate one or more copies of the title to their local branch. Please fill out [this form](#) and submit it with your donation at your nearest branch. Works of local authors are added only if these materials meet general selection criteria. Donations are not returned.

### **Interlibrary Loan Materials**

HCLS recognizes the wealth of resources available through other libraries in the Baltimore-Washington area and does not needlessly duplicate materials. The Maryland Interlibrary Loan Organization makes available the resources of neighboring municipal, county, and academic libraries as well to HCLS customers. Access to the holdings of Maryland libraries and many libraries throughout the United States is available through SAILOR, a service of Maryland's public libraries that provides broadband Internet access for public libraries, schools, and local governments in Maryland, and an extensive collection of specialized online research tools for the use of Maryland public library customers.

### **Gifts and Memorials**

HCLS may accept donated books and other materials with the understanding that they most likely will not be added to the collection. HCLS may have gifts appraised based on the perceived value of the gift to the collection and demand for the collection. Appraisal of gifted items is extremely rare and must be requested in writing with justification to the President & CEO. Donations and gifts not accepted will be included in HCLS' existing collection outsourcing and resell program, as accepted.

Friends and Foundation of HCLS accepts monetary gifts from individuals and organizations for the purchase of materials and in support of classes. Such gifts may be in memory or in honor of an individual, in which case a recognition memento will be determined with the originator of the gift fund. HCLS selection standards also apply in these cases.

### **Collection Maintenance**

Materials in the collection are continuously monitored. Items may be withdrawn if the format becomes obsolete or they contain outdated or inaccurate information, are superseded by a newer edition, are worn, or badly marked, are duplicates, or are seldom used. Space, replacement cost, and the quality and appearance of the collection are factors in this decision.

### **Reconsideration of HCLS Materials**

Customers may request reconsideration of an item's inclusion in the Library's collection. These requests can only be made by a resident of Maryland over the age of 18 years and must be made in person at any branch. Requests from non-verified residents will not be accepted.

An individual customer may only submit 6 requests per year. Reconsiderations are administered through the following procedure which is approved by the President and CEO:

1. The customer seeking reconsideration of a work completes the [Request for Reconsideration of Material form](#).

2. The customer seeking reconsideration must read, view, or listen to the entirety of the work before requesting reconsideration of library material.
3. The customer may submit the Request for Reconsideration of Material form at any branch service desk and present proof of residency. The customer's request will be logged, and the customer will receive written communication acknowledging receipt of the Request for Reconsideration form by the library within 30 days.
4. The form will be routed to the Director of Collection Development who will assign a designee to review and research the request using the general criteria of the Materials Selection Policy and reviews from recognized sources, then make a written recommendation.
5. The designee will present the recommendation to the Director of Collection Development, the COO of Public Services, the COO of Support Services, and the President & CEO for approval.
6. The Library's decision will be communicated in writing to the customer within 30 days.
7. The President & CEO will inform the Library Board of Trustees of the Library's decision within 30 days of the original request.
8. If the customer is not satisfied with the Library's decision, the customer may file a written notice of appeal within 30 days to the Library Board of Trustees. Such appeal shall not exceed two pages and should include copies of the original Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form and the Library's written decision.
9. The Library Board of Trustees will reconsider the decision based on whether the particular item conforms to the criteria outlined in the Board-approved Materials Selection Policy. In addition, the Board may, at its discretion, appoint an independent advisory panel to review the submission and to make a recommendation to the Board. The Board of Trustees shall then make the final determination of the matter, notifying the library user in writing of this action, within 60 days.
10. If an item submitted for consideration has been submitted, reviewed and decision communicated, the Director of Collection Development may use the prior response to respond to the new customer request and close the request.
11. During the review process the Library will take appropriate action to ensure the item will continue to be available, if the item is currently in the collection.
12. Records for requests and reconsideration are only retained for 12 months.