Bryan + College Station Public Library System

Policy: MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

Description of Community Served

Bryan, College Station and Brazos County are centered in an area bounded by the metropolitan areas of Dallas-Fort Worth, 170 miles north; Austin, 103 miles west; San Antonio, 166 miles southwest; and Houston, 95 miles southeast. Approximately 75 percent of Texas’ population resides within 200 miles of Bryan and College Station.

The area is classified as East Central Texas about 140 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico. County boundaries are formed by the Brazos River on the south and the Navasota River on the east.

Bryan and College Station lie in an area known as the Post Oak Belt, where fields and rolling green hills have an abundance of trees including the post oak, live oak, elm and hickory. Elevations in Brazos County range from 200 to 400 feet MSL.

Area lakes cover over 180,000 acres and include Lake Somerville, Lake Livingston, Lake Conroe, Gibbons Creek Reservoir, Lake Limestone and Lake Bryan.

Bryan and College Station are cities similar in size, with a combined population approaching 152,415 people. The cities have separate city governments as well as police and fire protection, and there are there are cooperative entities, such as the public library system, the Economic Development Corporation, the Chamber of commerce, 911 Emergency services, the Brazos Animal Shelter and others.

Ethnic population categories as stated in the 2000 census show 74.5% are white; 10.7% are black; 17.9% are Hispanic; 0.4% are American Indian; 4.0% are Asian, and 8.4% are other. The groups do not add to 100 because some people reported more than one category.

Bryan and College Station is the home of Texas A&M University. The university has more than 44,000 students and offers extensive intellectual and cultural advantages to the community.

Bryan and College Station is a mid-size community that has ample space for future growth and accessibility of residential developments, green areas, and numerous educational, cultural and recreational opportunities with minimum transit time.

Service Statement

The Bryan + College Station Public Library System provides free library service to all citizens of Brazos County. We attempt to fill the informational, recreational, cultural and educational needs of our users, and to encourage non-users to partake of our services. We continually try to find ways of expand our services to more people so that we can serve every possible kind of library user. In this effort, we provide materials old and new, classic and ephemeral, orthodox and unorthodox, in many media, including several forms of print, video and recordings.

To sum up, it can be said that our goal, in addition to supplying information and recreation, is to make available all recorded ideas for all people.

The City of Bryan has provided and funded public library services to residents of Brazos County and surrounding counties since 1903 when the Carnegie Library opened. In 1979 the City of College Station
began annual contributions to the Bryan Library budget. In 1982 Bryan approved an ordinance charging an annual fee for residents living outside Brazos County who wish to borrow materials.

In 1986 the City of Bryan contracted with the City of College Station to provide branch library services in that community. The library is administered by the Bryan Community Librarian. Direct and indirect costs are paid by the City of College Station. College Station continues to contribute outright to the Bryan Library book budget in addition to its contractual costs. Brazos County no longer contributes to library services.

**Authority and Responsibility for the Maintenance of Library Collections**

It is a function of librarians to select and to discard library materials and offer advice on their use. They are fitted for this task through training and experience. However, they must of necessity work within limitations of space and budget. And although they try to inform themselves as well as possible, they must work within limitations of knowledge. Selection and withdrawal processes are, therefore, cooperative, and we welcome advice and suggestions from members of the community, Library Board members, or authorities in various fields. Librarians, however, are responsible for judging the needs of the collection and they must make the final choices.

Final authority for the collections rests with the Community Librarian.

**Withdrawals of Materials from Library Collections**

Materials are regularly discarded from the collections. They are withdrawn because they are out-of-date, so badly worn or damaged that they cannot be bound or mended, because it is cheaper to replace them, or because they are once-popular materials that are no longer used. Space, the cost of replacement, and the appearance of the collection are factors in these decisions. Withdrawn materials are sold at the Friends of the Library book sales or appropriate portions are used in the picture files and displays.

**Gifts**

Gifts of books and other materials are accepted with the understanding that they may be used or disposed of as the library sees fit. New titles acquired in this manner are subject to the basic standards of selection. Replacements and duplicate copies are added to the collection if needed. The costs of processing and the availability of shelving space are also factors in determining the acceptance of gifts. The library does not provide evaluations of gifts for tax deduction or other purposes.

**Freedom to Read, See and Hear**

We believe it is essential, in a free society, for all citizens to have access to all library materials. Therefore, no restrictions are placed on what anyone may read, see, or hear in the collection of the Bryan + College Station Public Library System. Well-intentioned persons or groups occasionally question items in library collections. Although we understand and appreciate their fears and doubts about the effects of materials on impressionable persons, we take the position that the risk of not providing access to information and ideas is greater than the risk of providing it. Information, graphics and text accessed on the Internet are not considered a part of the library collections. The library system does not filter public access computers but users must sign a statement that they will not use the computers for viewing prurient interests. The result of such use will result in loss in immediate and permanent loss of computer privileges.
Sometimes suggestions are made regarding the restriction or removal of certain library materials, and we, therefore, wish to enunciate the following principles:

**Controversial Materials:** In an effort to provide our patrons with diverse sources of information and the widest possible range of ideas and viewpoints, we acquire some controversial materials. Some of this material may be offensive to individuals or groups because of perceived profanity, social economic and political ideas, religious viewpoints, and the background of the author, the kinds of information provided, or other reasons. Acquisition or use of any item does not imply approval or endorsement of the contents. Indeed, it cannot, since such a variety of ideas is collected. We do believe it is essential to provide such materials if the American ideal of freedom is to be retained.

**Age:** Judges, legislators, educators, and others are giving increasing recognition to the fact that children and young adults need access to all the information and ideas that are essential to their growth. Therefore, anyone, of any age, who is eligible for a library card may have the use of any item in the library, and is not to have to that privilege limited by any staff member. If parents wish to deny their children access to certain materials, they must take that responsibility themselves.

**Labeling:** It is sometimes suggested that a label be affixed to library materials indicating a political or social point of view or indicating that an item is questionable or controversial. Such labeling is subjective and suggests that Americans are incapable of making up their own minds about controversial subjects, and this practice is contrary to the American idea of the free market place of ideas. We do not subscribe to this practice.

We are willing to re-examine our position on any item in the library’s collections. In order to deal with objections to any item in the library’s collections, a procedure has been established. No item is to be removed or restricted—because of a complaint—except in accordance with this procedure.

**Privacy**

Reaffirming the Bryan + College Station Library System’s uninterrupted concern for intellectual freedom and for readers’ rights of privacy, the library will not identify materials called for or examined by them. An exception will be made only following a showing satisfactory to the Community Librarian or his/her deputy designated for the purpose of binding legal process.

**Guidelines for Adult Materials Selection**

Collections of adult materials must fill the informational, recreational, and educational needs of a wide range of library users whose reading levels vary greatly. These needs are met by many media and forms of materials, in English, Spanish, and other languages; included are books, periodicals, newspapers, microforms, recordings, videocassettes, framed art reproductions, talking books on CDs, DVDs, sculpture reproductions, and online databases.

Adult collections cover a wide range of subject areas and contain a variety of points of view on any given subject. Adult collections are not standardized through the system. The branches select materials to meet the specific needs of the community in which it is located. All users, regardless of age in the library’s service area, have access to materials anywhere in the system through both the Twin City Interlibrary loan process and direct referral of the user to another unit in the system.
Adult specialists select books, periodicals, and recordings on the basis of published reviews from general mass-audience periodicals and from specialized library review sources. In some cases, when published reviews are not available, materials are sent to staff members to review. Videocassettes are selected by using reviews, knowledge of the content of the film, review of the film, recommendations of library users. The videocassette collection is a part of the adult collection. There is no separate children’s videocassette collection. A major element in the selection of materials for the library is the knowledge and experience of the librarians.

The factors which determine the acquisition of materials include content; authority, e.g., background of the author; sources used; reputation in the field of the publisher or producer, etc.; current interest in the subject; relative value in the field covered by the material and the value of the material in relation to the collection for which it is being considered., e.g., duplication of material already published or available in the other libraries; more up-to-date than material in the collection, etc., effectiveness of presentation., e.g., organization of content; format; use of illustrations., e.g., funds available, size of the other libraries in the system.

The library’s entire collection of adult materials is re-evaluated periodically. Librarians are assigned sections by the Community Librarian to evaluate and revise portions of the collection and prepare replacement lists.

Reference collections are available for consultation by the public in each library include a selection of basic information sources such as almanacs, atlases, bibliographies, dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias, handbooks, as well as supplemental sources on a wide variety of subjects, levels, and formats such as books, pamphlets, documents, periodicals, audiovisuals, microforms and online databases. The scope and depth of each collection is determined by local needs and proximity to larger reference collections in the network of the library system or the community.

**Guidelines of Young Adult Materials Selection**

The Young Adult Fiction collection seeks to provide a range of materials to stimulate the interest of teenagers in reading and in the worlds around them. Material is selected to meet recreational, developmental and informational needs.

Librarians who work with young adults generally select these materials for junior and senior high school age users.

Young Adult titles should be selected from reviews in dependable review sources or read by a librarian.

Four criteria should be used:
1. Does it say something to young people?
2. Is it worth saying?
3. How well is it said?
4. Does it appeal to young people?

The overall merit of a work will be taken into consideration, including its accuracy, interest and value.

The Young Adult Fiction collection is separately identified to provide a transition between the Juvenile and Adult collections in terms of reading interests and abilities. Reference works are not in the Young Adult collection. The young adult has access to the juvenile, adult and reference collections and is assisted by library staff in the use of these materials.
Guidelines for Juvenile Collection

The Juvenile Collection is made up of materials designed to serve the needs of all children from infancy through the sixth grade, as well as adults concerned with this age group. A wide variety of material is considered for the collection, including books and periodicals, filmstrips, posters, and audiocassettes.

In recommending books for the Juvenile Collection, careful consideration is given to each new title and every new edition of a recommended title is treated as new. Literary quality, good design and format, and illustrations are important criteria in this evaluation as are accuracy, relevance, and appropriateness for the intended audience. Books should exhibit non-stereotypical attitudes although new editions of classics and some titles which reflect the beliefs of other times or other cultures may be acceptable.

Non-fiction books are considered in relation to all the other books available on the same subject; special consideration is given to these books which deal with topics about which very little else is available; books on the Southwest, and materials in Spanish.

Audio tapes, both spoken and musical, are available. The quality of the production and the performance, and the relevance to children are of primary importance. Filmstrips are no longer purchased, but the existing collection is used for story time and programming in the library. Framed art prints are no longer purchased. Some art prints for juveniles are located in the adult collection at the main library.

Reviewing and Ordering

Most materials are considered or rejected on the basis of reviews from professional reviewing journals and publications and/or by examination or recommendation of the material by subject experts, librarians, teachers, and patrons. All librarians serve as reviewers.

Each librarian may be assigned an area of the collection. All recommendations are reviewed and approved or disapproved by the Community Librarian.

Also, the following are parts of the Materials Selection Policy are the following ALA statements:

1. Freedom to View
2. Library Bill of Rights
3. Free Access to Library Materials for Minors
4. Freedom to Read Statement
5. Statement on Labeling