



For Immediate Release
November 6, 2023

From: The Wyoming Library Association Executive Board

The Wyoming Library Association (WLA) and its School Library Interest Group are committed to the free, robust exchange of ideas that is foundational to our democracy. As such, public, school, academic, and special libraries uphold Constitutional librarianship: making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, so that all individuals, young and old, have the opportunity to learn about, and engage with, a broad range of diverse topics and concepts.

WLA would like to take this opportunity to respond to the “WDE Guidelines for Establishing or Modifying Library Policy,” announced by Wyoming State Superintendent of Public Instruction Megan Degenfelder on November 1st, 2023.

- WLA agrees that any policies addressing materials in school libraries should be uniformly applied to all sexual orientations and not be used as a tool to discriminate, as stated in the document by Superintendent Degenfelder.
- WLA does not recommend modeling work on school district policy that is still in a public comment period (i.e. Appendix E, “Excerpt from Laramie County School District #1 Draft Policy Language”). When using other policies as a reference for future policies and/or guidelines, WLA recommends restricting the use to policies that have completed the public comment period and that have been both adopted and implemented.
- WLA does not agree with the application of “rating scales” such as those in the sample policy from Park County School District #1. Rating scales are not research based and not considered to be best practices.
- Industry standards and best practices for addressing requests for reconsideration are to consider the book (or work) as a whole rather than considering excerpts.
- WLA encourages school districts to use legal counsel when crafting legally-sound policies and definitions.
- WLA does not recommend districts implement an “Opt-In” policy, which results in the restriction of access to library materials; instead, WLA recommends districts implement an “Opt-Out” policy which supports parental involvement. WLA notes that parents have the ability to speak with their school’s librarians about their individual student’s needs.

School librarians are professional selectors, trained to assume the responsibility of curating age-relevant collections - including credible information about human development and sexual education. That being stated, school librarians also recognize the role of parents in the education of their individual students. These educators are trained to recognize individual family needs and to provide an avenue for parents to guide their own children in selecting reading materials that align with their own family’s values. WLA encourages parents to have meaningful conversations with their children and teens; to take responsibility for being aware of their child’s reading; to opt-out of any materials that don’t align with their own family’s values; and to not abdicate their responsibility to governmental entities.

Additionally, WLA encourages local school boards to seek out the expertise of their certified school librarians when creating, revising, and implementing local policies around the access and use of library materials and resources curated for the needs of their unique school communities.