



## **Classroom Libraries**

In Norman Public Schools, we believe in a culture of belonging and strive to create inclusive classrooms where every learner feels welcomed and included. Classroom libraries that 1) offer a wide range of materials to appeal to and support the needs of students with different interests and abilities; 2) provide access to multiple resources that reflect diverse perspectives and social identities; and 3) open up opportunities for students, teachers, and school librarians to collaborate on the selections available for student choice and reading are an important part of fostering a classroom of belonging.

The books in classroom libraries fall under selection and reconsideration of instructional resources outlined in our [district policy](#), including books purchased by teachers, materials obtained through grants like Donors Choose, and books that have been donated. This means that the books available in a classroom library, like everything else in the classroom—from required reading materials to movies and other media to instructional posters on the walls—should be chosen with the curriculum in mind and selected based on the teacher’s knowledge and professional assessment of what supports the curriculum and is appropriate for their students.

Classroom libraries should be specifically tailored for that class's reading level and interest level, while still providing the opportunity for self-selection. Providing a literature-rich classroom environment is important to support the curriculum, but as teachers build their classroom libraries, it is important they choose books that they can professionally support if a concern were to arise. Being mindful of age/grade recommendations for books in professional reviews and recommended lists and selecting accordingly is important. In addition, our school librarians are experts and are always eager to partner with teachers to provide support and guidance as they select books for their classroom libraries.

### **Professional Book Reviews**

Professional reviews can be accessed through the school library databases. Please see [this VIDEO](#) for detailed instructions. You must be logged into your school gmail to view the video. If you are accessing the Novelist database from a school site, no login is required. Remote access requires a username and password, available from your school librarian. The username/password is the same for every school. Click here for [Novelist](#) directions.

Other professional reviews can be accessed for free from:

- New York Times Book Reviews
- American Indians in Children's Literature Blog
- NCTE/ALAN (requires membership, see Jessica Eschbach)

Reviews that appear on social media platforms like Goodreads, or book purchasing sites like Amazon/Barnes & Noble, and CommonSense Media are not professional reviews and are not considered as a resource.

When using professional reviews, please look for the following criteria to assess your classroom library books: [see Novelist for review example](#)

- Age range or grade band. This is the age recommended the book is considered most developmentally appropriate. If one journal lists a large age range (12 & up or 14 & up, it is best practice to read other reviews to confirm the title fits with your grade level)
- Read the review and verify the review is positive. Journals do write poor reviews of books and will list some of the reasons the book is not recommended in a review. Example: facts are misrepresented or inaccurate, no bibliography or source list for nonfiction titles, a book that deals with heavy or complex topics doesn't also include a list of resources to get help, misrepresentations of culture, etc.
- Starred reviews go through an extra vetting process and multiple professionals reviewing the book must agree that the book has exceptional literary merit to earn stars. The criteria varies from journal to journal. Consistently, if a book earns a starred review in Booklist, School Library Journal and Horn Book (totalling three stars) this is a book with strong literary merit.
- A book does not have to have a starred review to be an exceptional read for your learners.
- School Library Journal (SLJ) now includes (starting in 2016) an additional tool at the end of each review. VERDICT gives the recommendation for purchase and often includes what readers will find appealing about the book, if it is a must purchase for all libraries, a secondary purchase for libraries looking to add more books on the topic or theme covered, or not recommended for purchase.
- You can use the subject area heading to see major themes and issues included in a book. Subject headings are not all encompassing and if you see a heading you find concerning, best practice is to read the book.



## Teacher Signature Sheet

### Classroom Library

NPS values the professional judgment of our teachers but also recognizes that teachers also need clear expectations and guidelines. It is always our goal to ensure our teachers are supported and informed. We also recognize that each teacher has unique and individual needs. If you have questions or need additional support while reviewing your classroom library, please speak with your principal. When reviewing your classroom library, if you have books that you are unsure if they meet the criteria or not, please collaborate with your principal, school librarian, or curriculum content coordinator.

Please read and sign:

I have read and understand the classroom library statement, NPS Board [Policy 5002](#) and [5002-01-R](#), and the Classroom Library Best Practices & Expectations. I also understand that as a teacher with a classroom library, I must either 1) review the books that students have access to in my classroom prior to the first day of school and remove any books that do not meet the criteria or I am unsure of or 2) pause student access to my classroom library until I have time to review the books. While I review the books in my classroom, students will continue to have access to check out books from the school library. Last, I acknowledge I will complete a classroom library inventory using a district-wide database system no later than December 16, 2022.

I am choosing to:

\_\_\_\_\_ review the books that students have access to in my classroom ***prior to the first day of school*** and remove any books that do not meet the criteria or I am unsure of.

\_\_\_\_\_ pause student access to my classroom library until I have time to review the books.

**OR**

\_\_\_\_\_ Other than district adopted textbook materials, I do not have any books in my classroom that students access or check out.

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade/Subject

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Signature



## Norman Public Schools Elementary Classroom Library Best Practices & Expectations

### **When evaluating literature for elementary classroom libraries, books must:**

- align with NPS Board [Policy 5002](#) and [5002-01-R](#).
- have been read in its entirety or have at least 2 professional reviews about the book.
- fall into an appropriate lexile range for the intended audience.
- contain content that is age appropriate.
- invite the reader to consider and engage with concepts, feelings, facts, or communities.
- depict real people, places, events, and time periods with authenticity and accuracy.
- reflect diverse perspectives, cultural practices, and social identities.

**When evaluating literature for elementary classroom libraries, any language and violent content must be appropriate for the intended audience.**

**Books that contain sexually suggestive/explicit are not appropriate for elementary classroom libraries.**

For guidance regarding what is appropriate for your age group, please visit with your librarian.

\*Reading materials that were part of a district wide curriculum adoption have been approved.



## Norman Public Schools Middle School Classroom Library Best Practices & Expectations

**When evaluating literature for middle school classroom libraries, books must:**

- align with NPS Board [Policy 5002](#) and [5002-01-R](#).
- have been read in its entirety or have at least 2 professional reviews about the book.
- fall into an appropriate lexile range for the intended audience.
- contain content that is appropriate for the intended audience.
- invite the reader to consider and engage with concepts, feelings, facts, or communities.
- depict real people, places, events, and time periods with authenticity and accuracy.
- reflect diverse perspectives, cultural practices, and social identities.

**When evaluating literature for middle school classroom libraries, any language, violence, or sexual content must be appropriate for the intended audience.**

**When evaluating literature for middle school classroom libraries, be mindful of the following topics and their context within the book:**

mental health	weapons	drinking/drugs/tobacco
religion	racial sensitivity	frightening content
sexual/suggestive content		

**For guidance regarding what is appropriate for your age group, please visit with your librarian.**

\*Reading materials that were part of a district wide curriculum adoption have been approved.



## Norman Public Schools High School Classroom Library Best Practices & Expectations

**When evaluating literature for high school classroom libraries, books must:**

- align with NPS Board [Policy 5002](#) and [5002-01-R](#).
- have been read in its entirety or have at least 2 professional reviews about the book.
- fall into an appropriate lexile range for the intended audience.
- contain content that is appropriate for the intended audience.
- invites the reader to consider and engage with concepts, feelings, facts, or communities.
- depict real people, places, events, and time periods with authenticity and accuracy.
- reflect diverse perspectives, cultural practices, and social identities.

**When evaluating literature for high school classroom libraries, any language, violence, or sexual content must be appropriate for the intended audience.**

**When evaluating literature for high school classroom libraries, be mindful of the following topics and their context within the book:**

drinking/drugs/tobacco

frightening content

language

mental health

racial sensitivity

religion

sexual/suggestive content

violence

weapons

**For guidance regarding what is appropriate for your age group, please visit with your librarian.**

\*Reading materials that were part of a district wide curriculum adoption have been approved.