

5-2022

SCHOOL LIBRARY LEADER BEHAVIOR AND SCHOOL BOARD SELECTION POLICY

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SCHOOL LIBRARY LEADER BEHAVIOR AND SCHOOL BOARD SELECTION
POLICY

By

Cynthia M. Stogdill

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Doctor of Education

Major: Education Administration

Under the Supervision of C. Elliott Ostler, Ed.D.

Omaha, NE

January, 2022

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Abstract

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University of Nebraska, 2022

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School librarians support access to information and resources in the school library. In a time of misinformation and fake news, access to accurate and timely information is key. School librarians work to serve the needs of all students in every learning environment including alternative, remote, and face to face. At the same time, school librarians are charged with providing multiple perspectives and resources which speak to the needs and interests of every student. Selection policy provides the framework for student access. The school library is a center for equitable student access to information and resources. District selection policies provide the foundation school librarians use in the selection process and acquisition of materials. School library leaders serve district librarians and students by supporting equitable access to resources which reflect and speak to diverse populations, needs, and experiences. The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore district school library leaders' behaviors regarding selection policies. Using the *ALA Library Bill of Rights* (2019) and specifically, the *Access to Information and Resources in the School Library: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* (2014a), the study evaluated behaviors which support access to information and resources in the school library. The results provide guidance regarding selection policy for school librarians, administrators, school board members, parents, and the community at large.

Dedication

I am deeply grateful to my committee for their insight and guidance during this journey. Dr. Ostler, I am most appreciative of your patience and guidance in the journey of my dissertation. Thank you for answering many questions and providing an objective viewpoint. Dr. Cast-Brede, thank you for the detailed reading and feedback on several drafts. Your insight moved me forward. Dr. Keiser, thank you for seeing the big picture and sharing your thoughts. Dr. Surface, thank you for your insight from a legal point of view and offering a unique perspective. Dr. Pasco, thank you for instilling me to “Teach from your feet, not your knees.” Your words and spirit sparked my passion for equitable access to resources for all students. To my husband, Chris, thank you for your patience and support through the many drafts of tears and triumphs. To Abby and Hannah, thank you for being the strong women you are and inspiring me every day. To my students, I see your faces when I think about advocacy and access for all students. This is for you.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Every PK-12 student needs an advocate to clear the path toward equitable access to information and resources. School librarians defend this access daily. In a time of misinformation and fake news, access to accurate and timely information is key. Information in hand, students move toward affecting change in their communities and becoming thought leaders. School librarians work to serve the needs of all students in every learning environment including alternative, remote, and face to face. At the same time, school librarians are charged with providing multiple perspectives and resources which speak to the needs and interests of every student. Therefore, strong school libraries and librarians impact the entire school community by safeguarding and providing access to information and resources for PK-12 students (Lance & Kachel, 2018). Selection policy provides the framework for student access.

The school library is a center for equitable student access to information and resources. School librarians are uniquely qualified to seek, evaluate, and curate resources for students to use in their personal and academic endeavors. School librarians serve all students by providing access to resources which reflect and speak to diverse populations, needs, and experiences. Without interjecting their own opinions, school librarians provide objective and timely resources allowing students to choose their own position. School librarians also defend resources which deal with difficult issues but are needed by students who have no other means of reliable information or related experience.

District school board policy provides the foundation school librarians use in the selection process and acquisition of materials. The American Library Association (ALA)

recommends that all school libraries have a school board approved selection policy and a reconsideration policy (Rickman, 2010). The district policy wording is often based on the *ALA Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, Schools & Academic Libraries* (2018). Resources are then aligned to selection criteria stated in district policy. School librarians select print and digital resources such as novels, nonfiction, research databases, and curated websites for student use. The selection policy and selection criteria also guide selection and collection management including procedures for addressing controversial resources and providing access to all students.

School librarians use policy as a means to safeguard access to information on behalf of their students in the area of personal and academic research and interest. Using selection criteria outlined in school board policy, school librarians choose resources which support and align to curriculum as well as students' needs and interests. Providing access to equitable learning spaces and resources in both physical and digital environments, school librarians serve all learners.

Understanding and use of school board policy to support school library access is particularly important as the current learning environment changes. Students are working in face to face, remote, and hybrid learning environments where multiple barriers to resources exist due to location and technology. Students may not have a working knowledge of the best resources for a research project or personal issue. Access to this information is provided to students through in-person support, digital communication, and technology outreach through websites and social media and is provided through and is central to the school library, (Kimmell, 2014). Not all students have access to reading material or digital service in their homes. The school library provides access to print

materials as well as subscription database resources (Lance & Kachel, 2018). School libraries also provide areas of wireless internet access and charging stations. Often, the library in a student's school is the only library the student has access to for academic and personal use.

Framework

The *American Library Association Library Bill of Rights* (2019) and *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (2014a) provide a conceptual framework for the exploration of school library leaders' behaviors regarding equity of access. These will serve as the framework for survey instrument used in the study with respect to selection policies (ALA, 2014a). Through several revisions to include language which addresses privacy, technology, and censorship, The *Library Bill of Rights* serves as a "guide to action" (p. 57) for librarians in all settings.

Over time, interpretations have been developed to address the application of the *Library Bill of Rights* (Appendix A) to specific types of libraries including school libraries (2019). The most recent version of *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (Appendix B) was approved in 2014 and has evolved over time into a statement which addresses access and services for students in the school library as issues and needs arise in the learning environment. The interpretation focuses on the concept of access to include diverse students' needs including personal and instructional.

Definitions

- Behavior: skills which "carry with it a sense of mastery (Katz & Rath, 1986, p. 6).

- Board of Education Selection Policy: The American Library Association *Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries* states “comprehensive written policy that guides the selection, deselection or weeding, and reconsideration of library resources” (2018, para. 1).
- Closed Collection: “access to certain materials by placing physical or virtual barriers between the user and those materials” (ALA, 2014b, para. 2).
- Deselection: removal of resources from a library collection based on accuracy, currency, and relevancy (ALA, 2018, para. 2).
- Disposition: “dominant quality or qualities distinguishing a person or group” (Merriam Webster: 2020).
- Policy: “a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions” (Merriam Webster, 2020).
- Reconsideration: process by which a resource is reviewed according to selection policy guidelines (ALA, 2021, para. 1).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore district school library leaders’ behaviors regarding selection policies. Using the ALA *Library Bill of Rights* and specifically, the *Access to Information and Resources in the School Library: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* (2014a), the study evaluated behaviors which support access to information and resources in the school library. Public school library leaders who were listed as members of the Supervisors Section (SPVS) of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) were surveyed to determine the impact of school district

selection policy, selection policy influence on school library leader behaviors, and use of policy to safeguard access for all students.

Research Question

Is there an association between professional behaviors of school library leaders' ability to provide equitable access to information and resources for PK-12 public school students and the use of board of education district selection policy?

Delimitations

The sample population was limited to public school library professionals who were members of the AASL Supervisor's Section and met the self-reported job title criteria. The Supervisor's Section exists to provide a network for discussion of topics and concerns specific to those leading or in connection with school library programs. The study was limited to public school district library leadership roles. Individuals working in post-secondary education, private school, and charter school systems were not included in this study.

Significance of the Study

Understanding the process by which school librarians select resources for students is necessary. This selection process is the avenue by which students gather resources for their academic and personal use (Dawkins, 2017). Selecting and defending materials is often one of the most difficult parts of being a school librarian including the challenge of controversial materials found in the school library (2017). The selection policy provides the foundation for defending intellectual freedom and student access to information. The procedures and criteria outlined in a selection policy provide a definitive course of action in the defense of resources when there is a concern or controversial issue. Without this

guidance, the door is open to retention decisions which have long lasting effects on access to the very information students seek.

School libraries have existed in public education for over a hundred years. Their expansion came because of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 which provided funding for secondary education (Rudy, 2003). The role of the school librarian has evolved over time to become more integrated into planning, supporting, and providing instruction. School librarians are often the only individuals versed in the content of district selection policy. According to the AASL publication, *School Library Programs Improve Student Learning - Administrator's Guide*, school librarians are tasked with knowing and guiding others regarding policies which pertain to resource acquisition and access (2011). Building principals oversee a multitude of tasks each day including discipline, curriculum, instructional leadership, and scheduling. They look to teacher leaders, including school librarians, to support these processes in specific areas of expertise (Church, 2009). Additional research indicates the unique experience of school librarians. "They usually answer to supervisors who are not librarians, so the nature of their work is not always understood" (Moniz et al., 2016, p. 187).

This research may support school library leaders as they advocate for equitable access through district policy and provide guidance to school librarians working directly with PK-12 students. With the knowledge gained from this study, targeted professional learning may be developed which effectively guides district library leaders in supporting school librarians in their districts. The results of the findings may provide school library leaders with information to support advocacy for equitable access to school library information and resources, and to guide preparation programs with research to support

continued coursework in advocacy and policy development. Finally, an awareness of policies related to PK-12 student equitable access may benefit and protect all students served by school libraries.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Placing this research into the context of access to information and intellectual freedom for students in the PK-12 learning environment is necessary. This literature review will examine access, students' right to receive information, selection policy, and school library leader behaviors.

Equitable Access

Regardless of the learning environment, remote or onsite, students have information needs which must be met. The school librarian safeguards the access to resources for student needs regardless of reason. The American Library Association (ALA) (2010) defines access as “all information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users” (ALA, 2019, para. 4). For PK-12 students, this translates as the ability to identify, locate, and use library resources as they are needed for academic and personal interests through multiple means. Library resources include not only books and digital resources, but also support, space, and instruction.

Discussion of access also includes consideration for barriers to that access. Barriers to access include but are not limited to age, language and physical restrictions, and geographic location (ALA, 2004). According to Kathy Carroll, 2020-2021 American Association of School Librarians (AASL) President, “Consistent and equitable access to school library information and resources cannot be translated into an occasional

encounter or visiting consultant. Equitable access needs to have the same definition across the country, across the economic spectrum, and across grade levels” (2021, p. 5).

While these barriers always exist, during Covid-19 school closure in the spring of 2020, their presence was magnified when students had little or no access to their school library system. The school library may have been the only library and information access available due to transportation needs or physical home address which determined whether the student had free access to the public library system. Further, in a time of overwhelming and false information, the need for access to reliable resources is critical for students as they learn to make their own decisions about the world.

Prior to Covid-19 school closures, barriers to access existed for many students. Gorman suggests these barriers to access in school libraries are grouped into the following categories:

Personal: physical disability, lack of mobility, level of knowledge, level of education, level of literacy, English language skills, level of computer skills.

Institutional: location of library, layout of the library building, type, quantity and availability of equipment, helpfulness of staff, availability of staff.

Societal: Education system, political environment, unequal funding of library services. (2015, p. 164)

Gorman has written about the library profession derived from Ranganathan’s Five Laws of Librarianship. Gorman revisited these laws in a 1995 *American Libraries* article (1995, September), and a revision of Crawford & Gorman’s work *Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness, & Reality* (1995).

Dr. S. R. Ranganathan is regarded as the father of library science. His work in the area of library science remains as relevant in today's digital environment as it was in the 1930s. His philosophy regarding librarianship serves as a "lighthouse" for librarians in all areas (Bhatt, 2017). Ranganathan's Five Laws of Librarianship (1963) have served as the foundation for the library profession since their development in 1931. The five laws are as follows:

- Books are for use (p. 1);
- Books are for all (p. 74);
- Every book its reader (p. 299);
- Save the time of the reader (p. 336);
- A library is a growing organism (p. 382).

Barriers to student learning include not only devices and connectivity but also provision for and access to information resources (Winthrop, 2020). Ranganathan's first law states, "Books are for use" (1963, p. 26). Current interpretations of this law center around service and safeguarding access to information (Anderson et al., 2019; Gorman, 1995). Interpreted in the 21st Century, the first law evolved to include access to the resources librarians curate for users including physical library space and digital spaces students use to access resources (McMenemy, 2007).

The second law and third law state, "Books are for all" and, "Every book its reader." These laws provide guidance on diverse resources for all library users; however, a deeper interpretation provides insight into the provision of information. According to McMenemy (2007), not only is it necessary to curate resources for diverse perspectives, but also to fight against any means of censorship and inequality of access, which might

prevent users from finding those resources. McMenemy further states that it is the librarians' duty to avoid barriers to access and most definitely, to not create barriers (2007). The second law is the one "we must continuously defend above all others, since it is at its root is the freedom for people to access writings of all kinds and inform their own minds on topics that others may wish to suppress" (McMenemy, 2007, p. 99).

Right to Receive Information

Rights of students to receive information rests at the heart of the equity of access. Access to libraries is crucial to an educated citizenry (Gorman, 2015). Regardless of the learning situation, students have a right to receive information as provided by the U.S. Constitution and the First Amendment. While the right to receive information is provided by the First Amendment, courts have left its interpretation unclear (Bezanson, 1987). Several court cases have scaffolded the discussion regarding the right to receive information and school libraries. In *Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, Chief Justice Warren wrote that learning "cannot flourish in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. Teachers and students must always remain free to inquire, to study, and to evaluate..." (1957, p. 250). Although not specific to school libraries, this case addressed the role of inquiry in the learning environment. *Tinker v. Des Moines School District* extended First Amendment protection to minors in public schools (1969). The Supreme Court's decision in *Board of Education v Pico* (1982) dealt with school boards' ability to remove items from junior high and high schools and its application to school libraries (Shupala, 2005). The court was split and left the issue regarding students' right to receive information in the school library unclear (Bezanson, 1987).

The Supreme Court did determine that school boards may not remove books from school libraries because they disagree with the ideas within those books (Rickman, 2010). The Court also affirmed that students have the First Amendment right to receive information and therefore school officials are prohibited from removing items at will (Shupala, 2005). In addition, Justice Fortas wrote in *Tinker v. Des Moines School District* that while school boards have broad discretion, students' First Amendment rights should be upheld (Burns, 2010).

More recently, legislative bills with the potential to overrule school boards and selection policies have been introduced in several states. The Parental Oversight of Public Libraries Act (HB 2044) was introduced in the Missouri Legislature during the 2021 legislative session. The bill sought to restrict public libraries from providing access to "age inappropriate sexual materials" (2021, p. 2). The bill called for each library to have a parental oversight board with elected members and no representation by library staff. Librarians who fail to comply may be fined. At the end of the legislative session, there was no hearing scheduled for the proposed legislation. The Nebraska Unicameral debated the Change Provisions Relating to Obscenity (LB282) bill during the 107 Legislative Session. The bill proposed the restriction of materials considered obscene in post-secondary education (2021). This bill was debated on the Unicameral floor in January, 2021, but has not moved forward since that time. While these two pieces of legislation did not pertain directly to school library selection, the potential exists for legislation to extend to school libraries. The Georgia legislature considered the Sale or Distribution of Harmful Materials to Minors (SB 226) bill in the 2021-2022 Regular Session. This bill applied directly to school libraries and sought to task administrators and school boards

with responsibility for reviewing controversial materials (2021). The bill was set aside at the end of the session for discussion in the next legislative session.

Library Bill of Rights

Within the library community, the idea of equity of access and right to receive information is outlined in statements originated and revised by the ALA. The *Library Bill of Rights* (Appendix A) originated as a policy with the Des Moines Public Library in 1938 and was revisited and adopted by the American Library Association in 1939 (Magi & Garner, 2015). Through several revisions to include language which addresses privacy, technology, and censorship, it serves as a “guide to action” (p. 57) for librarians in all settings. The 1948 revision was broadened to include censorship and charged members to accept the responsibility to challenge censorship. Specifically, Article III included this change in wording:

Censorship of books, urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of morals or political opinion or by organizations that would establish a coercive concept of Americanism, must be challenged by libraries in maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment through the printed word. (Magi & Garner, 2015, p. 51)

The 1967 revision further broadened the issue of intellectual freedom and censorship with wording which provided libraries a foundation to advocate for intellectual freedom and resist censorship of any kind. Article III specifically outlines this charge. “Censorship should be challenged by libraries in the maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment” (Magi & Garner, 2015, p. 51).

Access to Resources and Services in the School Library

During the ALA Annual Conference in 1953, concerns were raised at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) regarding selection of materials and school libraries. This conversation took place through the lens of the anticommunism and McCarthyism movements in the United States (Magi & Garner, 2015). The board voted to begin work on a statement which applies to book selection and the defense of materials in school libraries. Adopted in 1955 by the AASL and the ALA, the *School Library Bill of Rights* served as the guiding document for school libraries with regard to intellectual freedom and selection of materials. The revision of both documents over time resulted in confusion and redundancy leading to the withdrawal of the *School Library Bill of Rights* by the American Association of School Librarians in 1976 and the endorsement of the *Library Bill of Rights* as its guiding document (Magi & Garner, 2015).

While the *Library Bill of Rights* was designed to provide guidance on issues of access and intellectual freedom, its use in specific situations created questions. Interpretations have been developed to address the application of the *Library Bill of Rights* to specific types of libraries and concerns specific to libraries (2019). The first six interpretations were developed between 1971 and 1973:

- Challenged Materials
- Free Access to Libraries for Minors
- Evaluating Library Collections
- Expurgation of Library Materials
- Restricted Access to Library Materials

- Sexism, Racism and Other -Isms in Library Materials.

An interpretation specific to school libraries was adopted in 1986 in response to the increase in book challenges in the 1980s. The school library interpretation addressed responsibility for selection and advocacy for intellectual freedom as its core components. Wording specific to access and method of delivery was adopted in 2008. In addition, the role of school librarians and school boards with regard to policy was addressed in the 2008 adoption. Renamed the *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (Appendix B) in 2014. (Magi & Garner, 2015, p. 54)

The most recent revisions were made to adjust wording from “equal” to “equitable” to reflect the idea that access to services in the school library should be “just and fair” and not simply uniform (Magi & Garner, 2015, p. 143). The school library interpretation has evolved over time into a statement which addresses access and services for students in the school library as issues and needs arise in the learning environment. It has also focused on the concept of access to diverse students’ personal and instructional needs. The final paragraph of the interpretation addresses policies concerning development and selection.

It is the responsibility of the governing board to adopt policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. It is the responsibility of school librarians

to implement district policies and procedures in the school to ensure equitable access to resources and services for all students. (Magi & Garner, 2015, p. 54)

Freedom to Read

While librarians have been tasked with defending intellectual freedom and working against forces to limit access to resources, they are not the only group advocating for access to resources. The *Students' Right to Read* statement by the National Council of Teachers of English was adopted in 1953 and outlines the individual's right to read as a foundation of a democratic society. It states the freedom to read should be entrusted to individuals (NCTE, 2018, para. 10). In a joint statement by the ALA and the Association of American Publishers, the *Freedom to Read* Statement outlines reading "among our greatest freedoms," (ALA, 2004b, para. 5). The statement further outlines that "freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain fit matter for that reader's purpose," (para. 12). The statement further supports the idea that "suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension," (para. 4).

School Librarian Behaviors

While always integral to the learning community, the role of the school librarian in the learning environment became more evident during the spring 2020 school closure due to Covid-19. School librarians had the opportunity to influence not only students, but also families and communities with support and resources. With restricted or no access to school materials, school librarians curated digital resources for students, teachers, and parents to use during remote and home learning. They contacted vendors and publishers for resources and permission to use materials in video lessons and online read-alouds.

The actions of school librarians rested on students' needs and concerns during an unsettling time. This was a time for "our school librarians to flex their muscles and really step forward" (C. Haeffner, personal interview, March 14, 2020).

School library resources include materials in print and digital format for personal interest and academic research, as well as print and digital books for reading enjoyment. The learning environment demands advocacy by school librarians for access to resources for students (Rickman, 2010). School librarians are in a unique position to identify areas of need with regard to access (Bamberger et al. 2020).

Librarians work daily to provide students with learning opportunities that require problem solving and higher-level thinking skills. They support reading instruction and promote reading for pleasure. They teach students to locate information efficiently, to evaluate information critically, and to use information productively. They focus on helping students become ethical consumers and producers of information." (Church, 2013, p. 46)

Research by Todd and Kulthau (2005) indicates that the role of the school librarian is expanding to encompass deeper collaborative instruction, data collection, and student social-emotional support within and outside of the physical library space. Therefore, the resources school librarians curate often encompass many topics, some controversial. Equitable access in the school library is critical as it is the only library a student may visit. Access to a public library can be restricted due to barriers in location, transportation, and cost. School librarians are able to connect learning across disciplines, grade levels, and buildings by supporting and creating collaboration opportunities between teachers and students.

Behaviors are defined as skills which “carries with it a sense of mastery,” (Katz & Rath, 1986, p. 6). These are the tasks one completes which are learned and require little forethought (Jones & Bush, 2009). Library-related behaviors include cataloging, managing circulation, shelving, and organizing a collection. A list of tasks and requirements compiled by Case and Lowry (1973) included seven competencies, 75 job functions, and 676 tasks as a foundation for evaluation of school librarians. While tasks have evolved over time, each school library position is unique in its requirements of the school librarian (Frye, 2014; Sandford, 2013). These skills can be learned and performed as part of the knowledge base and the role of the school librarian. Preparation programs align AASL standards to guide coursework for emerging school librarians (Burns, 2014). These behaviors are necessary and most often the most visible from the outside (Novotny, 2017).

Behaviors are, however, connected to the professional dispositions held by school librarians. “Often what is taught by the librarian is absorbed and used by students without any connection back to the librarian (Novotny, 2017, p. 161). According to Sandford, school librarians enter a position and are confronted by the immediate needs of the students, school culture, and administration expectations (2013). As school librarians navigate through the tasks related to their own library spaces, their dispositions also move them forward.

As educators, they teach the information practices and behaviors embedded in the information field while simultaneously modeling the characteristics of learners, information seekers, and curators and creators of knowledge. School librarians must engage the skills of both educator and information professional, wearing two

identities like a pair of skis as they navigate the slopes of information use and instruction. Having a set of foundational behaviors, or dispositions, helps guide school librarians and keep them anchored throughout this professional adventure (Cromartie & Burns, 2009, p. 78).

School librarians require skills and knowledge to manage a school library and professional dispositions found in school librarian professional conduct. School librarians bring diverse backgrounds and experiences to the profession and to schools they serve (Sandford, 2013), which align themselves in the use of policy and defense of intellectual freedom. Dispositions are a "pattern of acts that were chosen by the teacher in particular contexts and at particular times" (Katz and Raths, 1986, p. 7). According to the authors, dispositions are uncoerced patterns of behavior over time. Chosen and intentional, dispositions develop as mindful behaviors driven by an internal compass. "Dispositions add another requirement for school librarians who must possess thorough skills and extensive knowledge; an added component that makes a school librarian dynamic and impactful," (Cromartie & Burns, 2019, p. 78). A study by David Perkins and Shari Tishman of Project Zero is referenced by Jones & Bush as it identifies three essential components of dispositional behavior:

- Sensitivity—to have your antennae up as you register or notice opportunities to carry out a specific behavior. Do you recognize an appropriate occasion to act in a caring manner toward a student?
- Inclination—to have the tendency and the impulse to act upon opportunities to carry out a specific behavior. Do you feel inclined or motivated to invest in acting in a caring manner toward a student?

- Ability—to have the follow-through knowledge that will allow you to successfully act upon this opportunity to carry out a specific behavior. Do you have the capacity to act in a caring manner toward a student in this situation effectively? (2009, p. 11).

Because school librarians hold a unique position in the information and learning environment (Cannell, 2017), support from district-level, school library leadership provides guidance in the policies which support access. The development of the school library profession outlines a journey from a keeper of the books to an educator well versed in technology, literacy, and leadership.

The role of the school librarian requires the guidance of school library leadership to support practicing librarians with regard to policy and use. Rooted in empathy and positivity, school librarians often make difficult and unpopular decisions (Goleman, 2006). These include decisions regarding selection and access for PK-12 students to information and resources, some controversial and sensitive, but nonetheless important to the students' information needs. Through these interactions, school librarians develop grit and perseverance (Johnson, 2017). These interactions slowly build school librarians' professional capacity to take risks (Weisberg, 2017) and make decisions based on what is right for students and not convenient for others.

National School Library Standards

School librarians safeguard access for PK-12 students through an understanding of best practices and the use of selection policy. These practices are outlined in the *National School Library Standard for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* (2018). The standards provide guidance to school librarians on professional behaviors

which align to six foundations: Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, Engage (AASL, 2018). Within each of the AASL shared foundations there are four domains: Think, Create, Share, and Grow. Within the “Curate” shared foundation and the “Create” Domain, school library access, materials access, selection and retention are addressed from the learner, school librarian, and school library competency perspectives. The school library competency follows:

The school library promotes selection of appropriate resources and tools for information use by:

1. Demonstrating and documenting how resources and technology are used to address information needs.
2. Providing opportunities for all members of the school community to develop information and technology skills needed to promote the transfer of information-related problem-solving strategies across all disciplines.
3. Employing a dynamic collection policy that includes selection and retention criteria for all materials within the collection.
4. Implementing an administratively approved and endorsed policy that clearly addresses procedures for handling material challenges.
5. Designing and providing adequate, appropriate space for library resources, services. and activities (AASL, 2018, p. 95).

The school library competency addresses the management of collections through acquisition, deselection, and retention of resources to promote diverse perspectives using criteria outlined in an approved selection policy. Procedures for review of controversial

materials should be included in the selection policy. Using school library competency, school librarians promote relevant information for learners who seek to access resources for their personal and academic use.

The ethics of school librarianship are further outlined in the *National School Library Standards* within the shared foundation “Include” and the “Think” domain. The school library supports balanced perspectives through resources and learning opportunities by providing reliable and timely resources which meet the diverse needs of learners (AASL, 2018).

School librarian dispositions are embedded in the “Include” domain as they become “Defenders” of access to information and also student voice. “They can do this through their actions and decisions as well as their words. Developing collections that have windows and mirrors for all readers, and providing access to tools and resources for all students support an inclusive learning community” (Cromartie & Burns, 2019, p. 82).

Code of Ethics

School librarians abide by professional ethics regarding the rights of students and equity of access (Dawkins, 2017). The *Code of Ethics* of the ALA (Appendix C) provides ethical principles which guide librarians. Written in broad terms to guide librarians in many types of situations, the *Code of Ethics*, as cited in Garner & Magi, addresses access and intellectual freedom in first and second components.

We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests. We uphold the

principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
(2021, p. 21)

Adopted in 1939 and amended in 1981, 1995, and 2008, this code outlines the professional and ethical responsibilities of librarians. It translates the value of intellectual freedom to the library profession and provides guidance on dealing with ethical issues. Librarians are charged with the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information which leads to the provision and safeguarding of equitable access for all library users (Garnar & Magi, 2021). These efforts are “unfettered by their personal, political, social or religious views” (ALA, 2014a, para. 5). The ethics of school librarianship are further outlined in the *National School Library Standards* within the shared foundation “Include” and the “Think” domain:

The school library supports balanced perspectives through resources and learning opportunities by:

1. Providing challenging and authentic opportunities that address the needs of the board range of learners.
2. Offering diverse learning experiences that allow for individual differences in learners.
3. Providing a comprehensive variety of resources (AASL, 2018, p. 77).

Here school librarians are tasked with guiding students to consider and use information which not only meets their needs but provides a window to a wider experience. The ability to align practice to the standards is provided in the selection policy and acquisition of materials. More needs to be understood regarding the connection between school board selection policy and school library leaders' behaviors

regarding policy in providing open access to information and resources for PK-12 students.

Selection Policy

The selection process includes not only criteria for selection, but also a framework for reconsideration of materials when a concern arises (ALA, 2018). Without this foundation, and no guidance provided, issues of student access to needed materials may be at risk (Dawkins, 2017). When no knowledge of selection policy or process exists multiple individuals who are not knowledgeable in policy and selection are able to make decisions regarding materials, in particular those which may be considered controversial. Research by Dawkins (2017) and Rickman (2010) found instances of self-censorship by school librarians when reviewing potentially controversial materials. With no policy, school librarians also find themselves in a position to pass over items which may cause issues when there is no clear policy for selection and reconsideration. Decisions made regarding controversial materials have far-reaching effects on student access to information. The policy protects criteria, process, and viewpoints as well as names those responsible for upholding and following the policy (ALA, 2018). Without this protection, students are not able to obtain information and resources of interest or need or those that speak to a particular point of view and experience.

Selection policy is the legal basis for selection and reconsideration of instructional materials including those within the school library and refers to students' rights to receive information under the First Amendment (Adams, 2008). The policy informs the broader community how and why materials are chosen over those that are not chosen (Adams, 2008). A selection policy also provides the framework for defense of materials in the

reconsideration process. A school district without a policy is vulnerable to complaints and will have no guidance on process and little legal basis for protecting students' First Amendment rights (Adams, 2008).

The ALA recommends that all school librarians have a school board approved selection policy and a reconsideration policy (ALA Toolkit; Rickman). To that end, ALA provides a toolkit for librarians and stakeholders to use in the development of selection policy. Developed in 1998 and updated in 2018, the toolkit provides guidance on the components of an effective policy as well as examples of policy. Kristin Pekoll, OIF assistant director, states in a *School Library Journal* article that the lack of a clear policy creates situations with no clear answers. Decisions made in the absence of a policy can set a poor precedent and have an impact on the future of the library collection and future challenges (Yorio, 2018).

Research has shown a positive relationship between a school board selection policy and the retention of resources during reconsideration (Rickman, 2010; Hopkins, 1991). An additional study by Kamhi indicated that the absence of a policy more often led to the removal or restriction of an item in reconsideration (1981). Selection policies outline a system of providing access to students in a school library. This access supports the learning mission of the school (Kimmell, 2014). Collection development stems from the guidelines set forth in selection policy. As stated in the ALA selection policy toolkit, selection policies should include several key components. These include who is responsible for acquisition and deselection and criteria for both acquisition and deselection. In addition, district selection policy should include a process for reconsideration of resources.

Library Collections and Student Achievement

Research has shown the positive relationship between the presence of a school librarian and student achievement (Lance & Kachel, 2018; Krashen, 2016; Subel, 2016). In a summative study, Kachel and her graduate students identified additional impact studies regarding school libraries. These studies were conducted over a ten-year period beginning with the “Colorado Study” in 1992/93 and ending with the “Pennsylvania Study” from 2011/12. Studies included impact areas of staffing, collaboration, instruction, budget, and technology (Kachel, 2013). Studies examining the impact of school library collections were included in this summary. Access and collection content were found to have an impact on student achievement (Lance & Schwarz, 2013; New Study Shows, 2010; Krashen, 2004, Lance & Hofschire, 2012). Further, research by Subel in 2016 stated that “students in schools with a professional librarian and a well-stocked library perform better on achievement tests” (p. 36). The revised AASL position statement, *“The School Librarian’s Role in Reading,”* outlines the areas where school librarians support strong collections and intellectual freedom. School librarians, “create, evaluate, and maintain policies that reflect the principles of intellectual freedom, provide learners with access to information, and protect learners’ privacy and confidentiality” (AASL, 2020, para. 7).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

The literature in chapter two outlines the role of access in providing resources to PK-12 public school students and school library leaders' ability to support this process. Understanding the relationship between district selection policy and school library leaders' ability to support student access to resources provides toward continued and increased access to resources for all students, as well as provide a foundation for school library leaders to build on as they guide school librarians in their district.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the association between policy and behavior. Student access to resources outlined in the American Library Association (ALA) *Library Bill of Rights* (2019) (Appendix A) and the *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (2015) (Appendix B) provided a framework for exploring this association.

Research Survey Item

Is there an association between professional behaviors of school library leaders' ability to provide equitable access to information and resources for PK-12 public school students and the use of board of education district selection policy?

Design

Research consisted of a quantitative study of responses regarding district selection policy and school library leader behaviors related to the *American Library Association Library Bill of Rights* (2019) and *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (2014a). The

research determined if a relationship exists between the presence of the district selection policy and the behaviors of school library leaders in supporting building school librarians in providing access to information and resources for PK-12 students.

Participants

School district library supervisors “provide leadership in establishing school library vision, mission and policy serve as the primary advocate for school library programs at the district level (Weeks, DiScala, Barlow, et al., 2017). The population sample was obtained from the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) Supervisors Section Membership available on the American Association of School Librarians website. In August 2021, the Supervisors Section included 393 members in the ALA Connect Community. Individuals were selected from this community based on self-reported professional job description and role in public school districts in the United States. Job description terms used to determine sample population were:

- Lead Librarian
- Supervisor
- Director of Library Services
- District Librarian

The population pool was reduced to 89 possible respondents based on this criterion.

Using the National Center for Education Statistics database to verify public districts, the survey population was reduced to 61 public school library professionals. District websites were accessed to locate the individuals in the potential respondent population. Emails were obtained for each potential respondent. Individuals within this

sample will be invited to complete the survey regarding behaviors and school library selection board policy.

Instrumentation

Construct Validity

After reviewing the literature, two similar studies aligned with the proposed research. Dawkins (2017) developed a survey instrument to identify factors which influence decision making regarding school library acquisitions. Burdic (2017) constructed a survey which explored selection decisions as they apply to social justice in the school library. For the purposes of this study, relevant Survey Items were identified in both surveys and then language was modified to provide an initial draft of the survey instrument.

Construct validity is necessary to ensure an instrument measures the theoretical construct it is intended to measure (Green, et al., 2009). Construct validity was accomplished through several layers of survey review. A review of the survey statements and language was performed by school library professionals. Initially, the survey instrument was reviewed by a former and a current district level school librarian for clarity (Fink, 2013; Gillham, 2000). Based on feedback, appropriate adjustments and edits were made.

In addition, the survey was piloted by members of the University of Nebraska - Omaha Nxt Wave II. These individuals were part of an advanced library leadership program including masters and doctorate level coursework. The survey instrument was administered through an on-line format twice over the course of two weeks to determine reliability. According to Fink, test reliability can be determined by gathering results from

the same group on more than one occasion. A high correlation indicates reliability (Gillham, 2000). This will also determine time needed to complete the survey and accuracy of instructions.

Survey

Statements were developed based on components found in *American Library Association Library Bill of Rights* (2019) and *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* (2014a). The survey (Appendix D) was constructed in three topic sections: demographic, behavior, and insight. This follows the categorical organization suggested by Gillman as an optimal survey arrangement. The progression of Survey Items provides ease for the respondent (Gillham, 2000).

Demographic components were recorded: gender, size of district, years of experience as a school librarian, and membership in state or local organization. The initial survey email invited those respondents with district selection policy to participate in the survey. Survey statements were designed as a behavior statement for components drawn from the framework. Respondents were also asked to rank framework components in order of priority. A final survey item offered respondents an opportunity to provide insight into their experiences in supporting school librarians in providing access to school library resources to PK-12 students.

Survey statements were constructed with an 8-point Likert scale. The Likert scale ranges from Strongly agree (8) to Strongly disagree (1). The larger scale provides a wider spread in survey results as opposed to a five-point scale with results mainly at three and four. The small scale tends to result in clusters around the midpoint (Bernstein, 2017).

The University of Nebraska at Omaha provided access to the Qualtrics survey instrument system. This web-based tool was used for the administration of the survey. This format provided an efficient means of completion and submission on the part of the respondents and provided data gathering tools for analysis. The on-line format will include an introductory email and acknowledgement of submission.

Procedures

Survey population emails were obtained through school district websites during the 2021-2022 school year. Survey population was sent an introductory email (Appendix E) prior to receiving the survey. The email introduced the research project and request participation. The email also contained information about the study including the following: purpose of the study; participant selection (Fink, 2013), safeguarding of responses, guarantee of anonymity, informed consent as required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB); and a link to the survey (Smith, 2013, p. 95). This introductory explanation served to provide reasoning for the study which should have provided a thoughtful response (Gillham, 2000).

Ten days following the initial email, a second email was issued to all individuals in the population sample. This message invited participants who had not yet responded to participate and a reminder regarding the importance of recipient contribution to the research (Gillham, 2000). Ten days following the second email request, a third email was sent to all individuals in the population sample. This communication was identical to the second email invitation and was the final contact. Research indicates the single most important factor in influencing response rates for surveys by email was multiple contacts

(Dillman, 2007). Further, according to Gillham, a response rate of fifty percent or more from a sample unknown to the researcher is considered satisfactory (2000).

Data Analysis

Survey responses were analyzed to determine if a relationship exists between selection policy and school library leader behaviors in supporting building school librarians as they provide access to resources for PK-12 students. Likert scale data used in the survey is non-parametric and ordinal. However, for the purpose of this study, data was analyzed to determine mean and mode. In addition, Spearman correlation was used to determine the association between district selection policy and school library leader behaviors. This statistical relationship was based on significant difference and was not a correlation analysis. The null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis were as follows:

H₀ There is no significant difference between school library leader behaviors in supporting PK-12 school librarians in providing access to information and resources and the presence of school board selection policy.

H₁ There exists a significant difference between school library leader behaviors in supporting PK-12 school librarians in providing access to information and resources and the presence of school board selection policy.

Level of significance was $p=.05$.

CHAPTER 4

Results

School library leaders use policy to support building school librarians as they provide access to information and resources for PK-12 students in public schools. Selection policy provides a framework for selection of resources and the reconsideration process when concerns arise. Using the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* (2019) and *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An Interpretation of the American Association Library Bill of Rights* (2014) as a foundation, school boards develop policies to guide and provide equitable access. This study explored the association between district school board policy and professional behaviors of district school library leaders. Using the *Library Bill of Rights* as the foundation, a survey was developed to measure professional behaviors and dispositions as they applied to equitable access to information and resources for PK-12 student. For this study, school library leaders who were members of the American Association of School Librarians Supervisor Section and serving in public school districts were surveyed. The potential respondent pool was gathered in August 2021.

A survey was sent to 83 district school library leaders. The data from 28 completed surveys was used to gain an understanding of association between district selection policy and school library leader behaviors. Fifteen Survey Items were queried on a Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 8 = Strongly Agree). Nine statements were posed for respondents to rank by importance (1 = Most Important to 9 = Least Important). The survey was divided into two branches based on the response to the Survey Item: "Does your school district have a school board selection policy?"

Respondents who indicated their district had a policy were then presented with statements which began “Based on district selection policy.” Respondents who indicated their district did not have a selection policy were presented with the statement only. Statements presented to both groups were identical in content. A final narrative survey item was available for respondent thoughts or insight regarding your experiences with selection policy and supporting school librarians as they provide access to school library resources to PK-12 students.

The research question which guided the study: Is there an association between professional behaviors of school library leaders' ability to provide equitable access to information and resources for PK-12 public school students and the use of board of education district selection policy?

Demographics

Eighteen respondents, 64.29%, serve in a school district with 10,000 or more students. Six respondents, 21.43%, serve in a school district with 5,000 to 9,999 students. Two respondents, 7.14%, respondents serve a school district with 2,000 to 4,999 students. Two respondents, 7.14%, serve a school district with 1,000 to 1,999 students. No respondents were recorded in districts with 250 to 999 students and 250 students or less (Table 1).

Table 1

<i>Respondent Data by School District Size</i>			
Student Population	Size	Number	Percent
	1000 – 1999	2	7.14
	2000 – 4999	2	7.14
	5000 – 9999	6	21.43
	10,000 +	18	64.29
Total		28	100

Fourteen respondents, 50.00%, had 21 years or more experience as a school librarian. Four respondents, 14.29%, had 16 to 20 years of experience as a school librarian. Four respondents, 14.29%, had 11 to 15 years of experience as a school librarian. Five respondents, 17.85%, had six to ten years of experience as a school librarian. One respondent, 3.57%, had less than five years of experience as a school librarian (Table 2).

Table 2

Respondent Data by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Experience	Number	Percent
	0 – 5	1	3.57
	6 – 10	5	17.85
	11 – 15	4	14.29
	16 – 20	4	14.49
	21 +	14	50.00
Total		28	100

Twenty-four respondents, 96.43%, work in a school district with a school board selection policy. Four respondents, 3.57%, work in a school district with no school board selection policy (Table 3).

Table 3

Respondent Data by School Board Selection Policy

	Policy	Number	Percent
	Yes	24	96.43
	No	4	3.57
Total		28	100

Twenty-six respondents, 92.86%, identified as female. Two respondents, 7.14%, identified as male (Table 4).

Table 4

<i>Respondent Data by Gender</i>			
	Gender	Number	Percent
	Female	26	92.86
	Male	2	7.14%
Total		28	100

Twenty-seven respondents, 96.43%, were members of a state or local school library organization. One respondent, 3.57%, was not a member of a state or local school library organization (Table 5).

Table 5

<i>Respondent Data by Membership in State or Local Organization</i>				
School Library Organization	Membership	Number	Percent	
	Yes	27	96.43	
	No	1	3.57	
Total		28	100	

Survey Results - Respondents with a School Board Selection Policy

Twenty-four respondents indicated they had a district selection policy in place. District policy was used to guide selection of items, equitable access to school libraries and information and resources for PK-12 students. Survey items in the Likert scale section of the survey began with the statement, “Based on district selection policy.”

Survey Item 1 – Diverse Points of View. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas.

The majority of respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support school librarians in providing access to PK-12 students with equitable access to resources which present points of view and a broad range of ideas. Three respondents, 12.50%, responded on the Agreement end of the Likert Scale (Table 6). The lowest Likert score on the diverse points of view item was a four, 4.17%.

Table 6

<i>Equitable Access to Resources which Present Diverse Points of View</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	18	75.00
	7	3	12.50
	6	2	8.33
	5	0	0
	4	1	4.17
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 2 – Access to Space. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to the physical school library space.

Fifty percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to provide equitable access to the physical school library space. Three respondents, 12.5% indicated a seven on the Likert scale, and five respondents, 20.83%, indicated a six on the Likert scale. Two respondents, 8.33%, chose five and four on the scale, respectively (Table 7).

Table 7

Equitable Access to the Physical Library Space

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	12	50.00
	7	3	12.50
	6	5	20.83
	5	2	8.33
	4	2	8.33
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 3 – Environment of Inquiry. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to an environment of inquiry.

The majority of respondents, 66.67%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access in an environment of inquiry. Two respondents, 8.33%, chose seven and six on the Likert scale. Four respondents, 16.67%, chose five on the Likert scale. No respondents chose a four or lower on the Likert scale (Table 8).

Table 8

<i>Equitable Access to an Environment of Inquiry</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	16	66.67
	7	2	8.33
	6	2	8.33
	5	4	16.67
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 4 – Resources for Intellectual Growth. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for intellectual growth.

The majority of respondents, 70.83%, strongly agree with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to resources for intellectual growth. Four respondents, 16.67%, chose seven on the Likert scale. One respondent, 4.17%, chose six on the Likert scale and two respondents, 8.33%, chose five on the Likert scale. No respondents chose a four or lower on the Likert scale (Table 9).

Table 9

Equitable Access to Resources for Intellectual Growth

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	17	70.83
	7	4	16.67
	6	1	4.17
	5	2	8.33
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 5 – Access to Resources for Personal Development. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for personal development.

The majority of respondents, 62.50%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to resources for personal development. Two respondents, 8.33%, chose seven on the Likert scale. Five respondents, 20.83%, chose six on the Likert scale and two respondents, 8.33%, chose five on the Likert scale. No respondents chose a four or lower on the Likert scale (Table 10).

Table 10

Equitable Access to Resources for Personal Development

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	15	62.50
	7	2	8.33
	6	5	20.83
	5	2	8.33
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 6 – Access to Resources for Individual Interest. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for individual interest.

The majority of respondents, 62.50%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to resources for individual interest. Four respondents, 16.67%, chose seven and six on the Likert scale. One respondent, 4.17%, chose five on the Likert scale. No respondents chose a four or lower on the Likert scale (Table 11).

Table 11

Equitable Access to Resources for Individual Interest

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	15	62.50
	7	4	16.67
	6	4	16.67
	5	1	4.17
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 7 – Resources Regardless of Age, Grade Level, and/or Reading

Level. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level.

The majority of respondents, 58.33%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level. Two respondents, 8.33%, chose seven on the Likert scale. Six respondents, 25%, chose six on the Likert scale and two respondents, 8.33%, chose five on the Likert scale. No respondents chose a four or lower on the Likert scale (Table 12).

Table 12

Equitable Access to Resources Regardless of Age, Grade, and/or Reading Level

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	14	58.33
	7	2	12.50
	6	6	25.00
	5	2	8.33
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 8 – Access to Electronic Resources. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to electronic resources.

The majority of respondents, 66.67%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to electronic resources. Seven respondents, 29.17%, chose seven on the Likert scale. One respondent, 4.17%, chose four on the Likert scale (Table 13).

Table 13

<i>Equitable Access to Electronic Resources</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	16	66.67
	7	7	29.17
	6	0	0
	5	0	0
	4	1	4.17
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 9 – Parent Permission or Special Shelving. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable and unrestricted access to resources (i.e. there are no items that require parent permission and/or located on special shelves such as "6th grade only")

Eleven respondents, 45.83%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable and unrestricted access to resources. Five respondents, 20.83%, chose seven on the Likert scale and four respondents, 16.67%, chose six on the Likert scale. One respondent, 4.17%, chose five and four, respectively, on the Likert scale. Two respondents, 8.33%, chose two on the Likert scale (Table 14).

Results from this Survey Item included the lowest ranking (2) of all Likert survey items. The number of respondents who chose “Strongly Agree” for this Survey Item was

the lowest (11) of all survey items. Overall agreement results (Likert 5-8) for this item were lower than other items at 87.5%. Disagreement results (Likert 1-4) were 12.50% and one of the two lowest percentages for all Likert survey items.

Table 14

<i>Equitable and Unrestricted Access to Resources</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	11	45.83
	7	5	20.83
	6	4	16.67
	5	1	4.17
	4	1	4.17
	3	0	0
Strongly Disagree	2	2	8.33
	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 10 – Controversial Materials. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in the selection of materials which may be considered controversial.

The majority of respondents, 54.17%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support selection of materials which may be considered controversial. Five respondents, 20.83%, chose seven on the Likert scale and four respondents, 16.67%, chose six on the Likert scale. One respondent, 4.17%, chose five and four, respectively, on the Likert scale (Table 15).

While overall agreement results (Likert 5-8) were 95.83%, the number of respondents who chose “Strongly Agree” for this item (13) put this Survey Item in the bottom third of all survey items.

Table 15

<i>Selection of Materials which may be Considered Controversial</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	13	54.17
	7	5	20.83
	6	4	16.67
	5	1	4.17
	4	1	4.17
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 11 – Reconsideration. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians' ability to maintain equitable access during the process of item reconsideration.

Fifty percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access during the process of item reconsideration. Three respondents, 12.50%, chose seven on the Likert scale. Three respondents, 12.50%, chose six on the Likert scale and three respondents, 12.50%, chose five on the Likert scale. Two

respondents, 8.33%, chose four on the Likert scale. One respondent, 4.17%, chose three on the Likert scale (Table 16).

Results from this Survey Item included the second lowest ranking (3) of all Likert survey items. The number of respondents who chose “Strongly Agree” for this Survey Item was the second lowest (12) of all survey items. Overall agreement results (Likert 5-8) for this item were lower than other items at 87.5%. Disagreement results (Likert 1-4) were 12.50% and one of the two lowest percentages for all Likert survey items.

Table 16

<i>Equitable Access During the Process of Item Reconsideration</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	12	50.00
	7	3	12.50
	6	3	12.50
	5	3	12.50
	4	2	8.33
	3	1	4.17
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Results from Survey Items nine, ten and eleven showed low scores in agreement and ranking. They are aligned to intellectual freedom components of the *Library Bill of Rights* and equitable access to information and resources for students.

Survey Item 12 – Selection Based on Policy and Criteria. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians' ability to select items based on adopted policy criteria and procedures.

The majority of respondents, 66.67%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support the ability to selection items based on adopted policy criteria and procedures. Two respondents, 8.33%, chose seven on the Likert scale. Four respondents, 16.67%, chose six on the Likert scale and two respondents, 8.33%, chose five on the Likert scale. No respondents chose a four or lower on the Likert scale (Table 17).

Table 17

Selection of Items Based on Adopted Policy Criteria and Procedures

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	16	66.67
	7	2	8.33
	6	4	16.67
	5	2	8.33
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 13 – Intellectual Freedom. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians' ability to maintain intellectual freedom.

The majority of respondents, 66.67%, strongly agreed with the statement they were able to able to maintain intellectual freedom. Three respondents, 12.50%, chose seven and six, respectively, on the Likert scale. One respondent, 4.17%, chose five on the Likert scale and one respondent, 4.17%, chose four on the Likert scale (Table 18).

Table 18

<i>Ability to Maintain Intellectual Freedom</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	16	66.67
	7	3	12.50
	6	3	12.50
	5	1	4.17
	4	1	4.17
	3	0	0
Strongly Disagree	2	0	0
	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 14 – Maintaining the School Library Collection. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in maintaining the school library collection.

The majority of respondents, 66.67%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support maintaining the school library collection. Four respondents, 16.67%, chose seven on the Likert scale and three respondents, 12.50%, chose six on the Likert

scale. One respondent, 4.17%, chose five on the Likert scale. No respondents chose a four or lower on the Likert scale (Table 19).

Table 19

Maintaining School Library Collections

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	16	66.67
	7	4	16.67
	6	3	12.50
	5	1	4.17
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Item 15 – Responsibility for Selection. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians as the responsible parties for selection of resources.

The majority of respondents, sixteen, 66.67%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support school librarians as the responsible parties for selection of resources. Three respondents, 12.50%, chose seven and six, respectively, on the Likert scale. Two respondents, 8.33%, chose five on the Likert scale. No respondents chose a four or lower on the Likert scale (Table 20).

Table 20

School Librarians as Responsible Parties for Selection of Resources

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	16	66.67
	7	3	12.50
	6	3	12.50
	5	2	8.33
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		24	100

Survey Results – Respondents with No School Board Selection Policy

Four respondents indicated they had no district selection policy in place. Likert statements were identical to those with a selection policy except for the statement, “Based on district selection policy.” These respondents had no district guidance for selection of resources or reconsideration of materials. Results from the fifteen survey items showed all respondents (4), chose five or above on the Likert scale. No respondents chose four or lower on the Likert scale for any survey item.

Survey Item 1 – Diverse Points of View. I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas.

All respondents, four, 100%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas (Table 21).

Table 21

<i>Equitable Access to Resources which Present Diverse Points of View</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	4	100
	7	0	0
	6	0	0
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 2 – Access to Space. I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to the physical school library space.

Three respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to the physical library space. One respondent, 25%, chose seven on the Likert scale (Table 22).

Table 22

Equitable Access to the Physical Library Space

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	3	75.00
	7	1	25.00
	6	0	0
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 3 – Environment of Inquiry. I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to an environment of inquiry.

Three respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to an environment of inquiry. One respondent, 25%, chose seven on the Likert scale (Table 23).

Table 23

Equitable Access to an Environment of Inquiry

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	3	75.00
	7	1	25.00
	6	0	0
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 4 – Resources for Intellectual Growth. I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for intellectual growth.

Three respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to resources for intellectual growth. One respondent, 25%, chose seven on the Likert scale (Table 24).

Table 24

Equitable Access to Resources for Intellectual Growth

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	3	75.00
	7	1	25.00
	6	0	0
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 5 – Access to Resources for Personal Development. I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for personal development.

Three respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to resources for personal development. One respondent, 25%, chose six on the Likert scale (Table 25).

Table 25

Equitable Access to Resources for Personal Development

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	3	75.00
	7	0	0
	6	1	25.00
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 6 – Access to Resources for Individual Interest. I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for individual interest.

Three respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to resources for individual interest. One respondent, 25%, chose six on the Likert scale (Table 26).

Table 26

Equitable Access to Resources for Individual Interest

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	3	75.00
	7	0	0
	6	1	25.00
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 7 – Resources Regardless of Age, Grade Level, and/or Reading

Level. I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level.

Three respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level. One respondent chose five on the Likert scale (Table 27).

Table 27

Equitable Access to Resources Regardless of Age, Grade, and/or Reading Level

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	3	75.00
	7	0	0
	6	0	0
	5	1	25.00
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 8 – Access to Electronic Resources. School Librarian Behaviors.

I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to electronic resources.

Two respondents, 50%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access to electronic resources. One respondent, 25%, chose seven on the Likert scale and one respondent, 25%, chose six on the Likert scale (Table 28).

Table 28

<i>Equitable Access to Electronic Resources</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	2	50.00
	7	1	25.00
	6	1	25.00
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 9 – Parent Permission or Special Shelving. I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable and unrestricted access to resources (i.e. there are no items that require parent permission and/or located on special shelves such as "6th grade only").

Two respondents, 50%, strongly agree with the statement that they were able to support equitable and unrestricted access to resources. Two respondents, 50%, chose five on the Likert scale (Table 29).

Table 29

Equitable and Unrestricted Access to Resources

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	2	50.00
	7	0	0
	6	0	0
	5	2	50.00
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 10 – Controversial Materials. I am able to support school librarians in the selection of materials which may be considered controversial.

Two respondents, 50%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support the selection of materials which may be considered controversial. One respondent, 25%, chose six on the Likert scale and one respondents, 25%, chose five on the Likert scale (Table 30).

Table 30

Selection of Materials which may be Considered Controversial

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	2	50.00
	7	0	0
	6	1	25.00
	5	1	25.00
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 11 – Reconsideration. I am able to support school librarians' ability to maintain equitable access during the process of item reconsideration.

Two respondents, 50%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support equitable access during the process of item reconsideration. Two respondents, 50%, chose seven on the Likert scale (Table 31).

Table 31

Equitable Access During the Process of Item Reconsideration

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	2	50.00
	7	2	50.00
	6	0	0
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 12 – Selection Based on Policy and Criteria. I am able to support school librarians' ability to select items based on adopted policy criteria and procedures.

Two respondents, 50%, strongly agreed with the statement that the selection of items is based on adopted policy criteria and procedures. One respondent, 25%, chose seven on the Likert scale and one respondent, 25%, chose six on the Likert scale (Table 32).

Table 32

Selection of Items Based on Adopted Policy Criteria and Procedures

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	2	50.00
	7	1	25.00
	6	1	25.00
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 13 – Intellectual Freedom. I am able to support school librarians' ability to maintain intellectual freedom.

All respondents, 100%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to maintain intellectual freedom (Table 33).

Table 33

<i>Intellectual Freedom</i>			
Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	4	100.00
	7	0	0
	6	0	0
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 14 – Maintaining the School Library Collection. I am able to support school librarians in maintaining the school library collection.

Three respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that they were able to support the maintaining of school library collections. One respondent, 25%, chose six on the Likert scale (Table 34).

Table 34

Maintaining School Library Collection

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	3	75.00
	7	0	0
	6	1	25.00
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item 15 – Responsibility for Selection. I am able to support school librarians as the responsible parties for selection of resources.

Three respondents, 75%, strongly agreed with the statement that school librarians are the responsible parties for selection of resources. One respondent, 25%, chose seven on the Likert scale (Table 35).

Table 35

School Librarians as Responsible Parties for Selection of Resources

Continuum - Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree	Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	8	3	75.00
	7	1	25.00
	6	0	0
	5	0	0
	4	0	0
	3	0	0
	2	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
Total		4	100

Survey Item Means

Likert scale data used in the survey is non-parametric and typically ordinal. For this study, the mean for Likert items was calculated and analyzed due to the low number of respondents with no district selection policy. Responses for each statement from school library leaders in a district with a selection policy ranged in mean from 6.67 to 7.54 with a variance of .87. Responses from school library leaders in a district with no selection policy ranged in mean from 6.50 to 8.00 with a variance of 1.50. The statement, “I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable and unrestricted access to resources (i.e. there are no items that require parent permission and/or located on special shelves such as "6th grade only)” resulted in the lowest mean for both groups of respondents. The low mean score is consistent with the Likert

responses which resulted in the lowest number of “Strongly Agree” responses. Response Mean scores were ranked and compared with item responses from respondents with no district selection policy. Spearman’s rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the mean scores of the two groups (Table 36). There was a positive correlation between the two variables $r_s(15) = .39, p = .154$ indicating a non-significant correlation ($p < .05$).

The mode, most frequently occurring, score was calculated for all Likert responses in the section where respondents indicated a district selection policy in place and determined to be eight. The range of Likert scores was six with the minimum score two and the maximum score an eight. Outliers for Likert survey items were identified as two, three, four, and five. All Likert items contained outliers; however, survey item 11 (Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians’ ability to maintain equitable access during the process of reconsideration.) contained the largest number of outliers (6). This survey item was second from the bottom in the number of “Strongly Agree” responses.

Table 36

<i>Response Mean Scores</i>			
	Policy	No Policy	Variance
Diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas.	7.54	8.00	-.46
Physical school library space.	6.88	7.75	-.87
Environment of inquiry	7.25	7.75	-.50
Resources for intellectual growth.	7.50	7.75	-.25
Resources for personal development.	7.25	7.50	-.25
Resources for individual interest.	7.38	7.50	-.12
Resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level.	7.17	7.25	-.08
Electronic resources.	7.54	7.25	.29
Unrestricted access to resources (i.e. permission/special shelves)	6.67	6.50	.17
Controversial Items	7.17	6.75	.42
Process of item reconsideration.	6.71	7.50	-.79
Adopted policy criteria and procedures.	7.33	7.25	.08
Maintain intellectual freedom.	7.33	8.00	-.67
Maintaining the school library collection.	7.46	7.50	-.04
School librarians as the responsible parties for selection	7.38	7.75	-.37

Survey Item Rank

Respondents with a District School Library Selection Policy

Respondents ranked nine statements in order of importance with 1 the most important and 9 the least important (Table 37). Respondents with a district policy ranked

the item “Resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas” as most important (2.46). This group ranked the item “Resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level” as least important (6.26).

Table 37

Please rank the following in order of importance - Policy

	Average	Rank
Resources which present diverse points of view and a broad	2.46	1
Resources for Intellectual Growth	4.46	2
Resources for Individual Interest	4.50	3
Environment of Inquiry	4.58	4
Physical School Library Space	5.38	5
Resources for personal development	5.54	6
Unrestricted access to resources	5.88	7
Access to Electronic Resources	5.96	8
Resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level	6.26	9

Respondents with no District School Library Selection Policy

Respondents with a no district selection policy ranked the item “Resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas” as most important (2.00).

These same respondents ranked the item “Unrestricted access to resources” as least important (7.25). (Table 38)

Table 38

Please rank the following in order of importance – No Policy

	Mean	Rank
Diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas	2.00	1
Environment of inquiry	4.25	2
Electronic resources	4.50	3
Resources for Intellectual Growth	4.75	4
Physical School Library Space	5.00	5
Resources for Individual Interest	5.00	5
Resource for Personal Development	6.00	7
Resources Regardless of Age, Grade, and/or Reading Level	6.25	8
Unrestricted Access to Resources	7.25	9

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship the mean scores of the two groups with a level of significance $p = .05$. This indicates that expected results would be within two standard deviations of the mean and a result outside of 95% would be statistically significant. The result of the data analysis was a positive correlation between the two variables $r_s(9) = 0.62, p = 0.08$. There was no significant difference between the two groups.

Results from the ranking section in the showed the statement "Resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas" as the highest ranked item for respondents with a selection policy (2.46) and those with no selection policy (2.0). However, the item which addressed unrestricted access to resources was ranked lower in

both groups of respondents. While diversity was a priority, the process of providing equitable access to all resources was not highly ranked in this group of respondents. Results from respondents who indicated they had a selection policy identified unrestricted access as an area of concern in the Likert response section but ranked this statement seventh out of nine.

Research Question

The research Survey Item which guided the study: Is there an association between professional behaviors of school library leaders' ability to provide equitable access to information and resources for PK-12 public school students and the use of board of education district selection policy?

Survey responses were analyzed to determine if a relationship exists between school library leader behaviors in supporting building school librarians as they provide access to resources for PK-12 students and the presence of a district selection policy. Likert scale data used in the survey which is non-parametric and typically ordinal. For the purpose of this study, the mean score was calculated for each survey item. This statistical relationship was based on significant difference and not a correlation analysis. The null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis are as follows:

H₀ There is no significant difference between school library leader behaviors in supporting PK-12 school librarians in providing access to information and resources and the presence of school board selection policy.

H₁ There exists a significant difference between school library leader behaviors in supporting PK-12 school librarians in providing access to information and resources and the presence of school board selection policy.

Respondents were divided into two groups based on their answer to the question regarding the presence of a selection policy in their school district. Spearman's rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between the mean scores of the two groups with a level of significance $p = .05$. This indicates that expected results would be within two standard deviations of the mean and a result outside of 95% would be statistically significant. The result of the data analysis was a positive correlation between the two variables $r_s(15) = .39, p = .15$. indicating a non-significant correlation, and therefore, a failure to reject the null hypothesis.

No significant difference was found between district selection policy and school library leader behaviors in supporting building school librarians in providing equitable access to school library resources for PK-12 student. Results from the study did, however, provide insight into concepts of equitable access and intellectual freedom addressed by the *American Library Association Library Bill of Rights* (2019) and *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (2014a).

The study results indicate strong agreement with district selection policy as a means for supporting equitable access in the school library for all respondents. In all categories but two, responses were in the 5-8 range on the Likert scale. The thirteen categories had ninety percent of scores between 5 and 8 on the Likert scale. The two categories with less than ninety percent were "Unrestricted Access (No special shelving or parent permission)" and "Items under Reconsideration." Respondents in these two categories chose twos and a three on the Likert scale. These two categories had the lowest overall mean (6.67 and 6.71 respectively).

Ancillary Findings

While the research question resulted in a failure to reject the null hypothesis, there were additional findings identified using the twenty-four respondents who indicated they had a district selection policy.

The mean was calculated across the fifteen survey items for each of the twenty-four respondents indicating they served in a district with a selection policy (Table 39). The survey item “Years of Experience as a school librarian” was ranked for each respondent. Experience was divided into five categories: 1 = 0-5 years; 2= 6-10 years; 3=11-15 years, 4=16-20 years; and 5=21 or more years. Respondent 17 had the lowest mean, 4.93. Respondents 6, 10, 15 and 16 had the highest mean, 8.00. Respondents with mean survey scores in the bottom 25% had fifteen or few years of experience.

Respondents Likert score and experience was identified and ranked for each of the fifteen survey items for the 24 respondents. Spearman’s rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between individual Likert mean scores and years of experience as a school librarian. There was a positive correlation between the two variables $r_s(24) = .33, p = .11$; however, there was no significant difference.

Point biserial correlation was calculated to determine significant difference between individual respondent mean for all Likert survey items and years of experience. Years of experience was used as the dichotomous variable by dividing the experience categories into low (0-10 years) and high (11-20+ years). The $r_{pb} = .528$ indicating a positive correlation but non-significant difference. The positive correlation shows that the ability to support school librarians in providing access to PK-12 resources increases as experience level increases.

Table 39

Respondent Mean Score and Years of Experience

Respondent	Mean	Years
1	7.40	16-20
2	7.33	21 +
3	7.80	21 +
4	7.53	11-15
5	7.87	21 +
6	8.00	11-15
7	6.80	16-20
8	7.53	21 +
9	6.53	21 +
10	8.00	6-10
11	7.87	16-20
12	6.20	11-15
13	6.33	6-10
14	7.93	11-15
15	8.00	21 +
16	8.00	21 +
17	4.93	6-10
18	5.60	6-10
19	7.67	21 +
20	6.33	11-15
21	6.60	21 +
22	7.73	21 +
23	7.93	21 +
24	7.73	21 +

Respondents' Likert score and district size were identified and ranked for each of the fifteen survey items for the 24 respondents. Spearman's rank correlation was computed to assess the relationship between individual Likert mean scores and district size as a school librarian (Table 40). There was a negative correlation between the two variables $r_s(24) = -.198$, $p = .35$; however, there was no significant difference.

Point biserial correlation was calculated to determine significant difference between individual respondent mean for all Likert survey items and size of district. Size of district was used as the dichotomous variable by dividing the student population categories into low (0-9999 students) and high (10,000 + students). The $r_{pb} = -.216$ indicating a negative correlation but non-significant difference. The negative correlation shows that the ability to support school librarians in providing access to PK-12 resources decreases as size of district increases.

Table 40

Respondent Mean for Survey Items & Size of District

Respondent	Mean	Students
1	7.40	1000-1999
2	7.33	10,000 +
3	7.80	5000-9999
4	7.53	2000-4999
5	7.87	10,000 +
6	8.00	10,000 +
7	6.80	5000-9999
8	7.53	10,000 +
9	6.53	10,000 +
10	8.00	2000-4999
11	7.87	1000-1999
12	6.20	10,000 +
13	6.33	10,000 +
14	7.93	10,000 +
15	8.00	10,000 +
16	8.00	5000-9999
17	4.93	10,000 +
18	5.60	10,000 +
19	7.67	10,000 +
20	6.33	10,000 +
21	6.60	5000-9999
22	7.73	10,000 +
23	7.93	10,000 +

24

7.73

10,000 +

Respondents' overall mean Likert score and experience were identified and ranked for each of the fifteen survey items for the twenty-four individuals (Table 41).

Individual survey items addressing equitable access were found to be significant:

Unrestricted access to resources.

Access to resources for intellectual growth.

Environment of inquiry.

Ability to maintain intellectual freedom

Resources for personal development.

Resources for individual interest.

Select items based on adopted policy criteria and procedures showed a probability of less than .05. The survey item addressing access to electronic resources had a result at $p=.058$ and would be considered significant. Results at $< p=.05$ are outside two standard deviations and therefore significant.

Table 41

Spearman Rank Correlation – Experience & Likert Survey Items

	Spearman	<i>p</i>
*Unrestricted access to resources.	0.565	0.004
*Access to resources for intellectual growth.	0.537	0.007
*Environment of inquiry.	0.49	0.015
*Ability to maintain intellectual freedom.	0.451	0.027
*Resources for personal development.	0.449	0.028
*Resources for individual interest.	0.441	0.03
*Select items based on adopted policy criteria and procedures.	0.425	0.038
Access to electronic resources.	0.392	0.058
Maintaining the school library collection.	0.378	0.068
During the process of item reconsideration.	0.372	0.073
Resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level.	0.222	0.297
School librarians as the responsible parties for selection of resources.	0.211	0.322
Selection of materials which may be considered controversial.	0.194	0.364
Resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas.	0.184	0.39
Access to the physical school library space.	0.097	0.65

Respondents' overall mean Likert score and district size were identified and ranked for each of the fifteen survey items for the 24 individuals (Table 42). Individual survey items addressing equitable access selection of materials which may be considered controversial showed a probability of less than .05. Results at $< p=.05$ are outside two standard deviations and therefore significant.

Table 42

Spearman Rank Correlation – District Size & Likert Survey Items

	Spearman	<i>p</i>
*Selection of materials which may be considered controversial.	-0.449	0.028
Maintaining the school library collection.	-0.353	0.09
Ability to maintain intellectual freedom.	-0.322	0.125
Resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level.	-0.282	0.183
Access to the physical school library space.	-0.244	0.25
Access to resources for intellectual growth.	-0.232	0.275
Select items based on adopted policy criteria and procedures.	-0.179	0.402
Resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas.	-0.178	0.403
Environment of inquiry.	-0.172	0.419
School librarians as the responsible parties for selection of resources.	-0.173	0.419
Access to electronic resources.	-0.122	0.571
During the process of item reconsideration.	-0.121	0.573
Unrestricted access to resources.	0.095	0.659
Resources for individual interest.	-0.041	0.847
Resources for personal development.	-0.036	0.869

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

Using the *American Library Association Library Bill of Rights* (2019) and *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (2014a) as a framework, this study examined the association between the professional behaviors of school library leaders' abilities to provide equitable access to information and resources for PK-12 public school students and board of education district selection policy.

A survey was sent to 83 district school librarians. The respondents were individuals with membership in the American Association of School Librarian Supervisors Section, served in a PK-12 public school district in the United States, and self-reported as a district school library leader. The data from 28 fully completed surveys was used to gain an understanding of how district selection policy affected library leader professional behaviors in providing equitable access to resources for PK-12 students. Respondents were divided into two groups within the survey: those with a district selection policy and those with no policy or not aware of a district selection policy. Analysis focused on the 24 individuals who indicated they had a district selection policy.

Drawn from components of the *American Library Association Library Bill of Rights* (2019) and *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (2014a) a survey instrument was developed to measure school library leaders' ability to support building school librarians in providing equitable access to information and resources to PK-12 students (Appendix D). Fifteen survey items were provided on a Likert scale (8 =

Strongly Agree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). Nine statements were ranked by respondents and one open-ended question collected insight into equitable access and selection policy. The fifteen Likert items addressed the following areas of access for PK-12 students in the school library:

- Diverse Points of View
- Access to Space
- Environment of Inquiry
- Resources for Intellectual Growth
- Access to Resources for Personal Development
- Access to Resources for Individual Interest
- Resources Regardless of Age, Grade Level, and/or Reading Level
- Access to Electronic Resources
- Unrestricted Access (No special shelving or parent permission)
- Controversial Materials
- Items under Reconsideration
- Selection Based on Policy and Criteria
- Intellectual Freedom
- Maintaining the School Library Collection
- Responsibility for Selection

Equitable Access

Survey items were based on the framework outlined in *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* (2014a). This foundation document is referenced as a basis for district

selection policy development and responsibility for acquisition and access. School librarians use this framework to provide equitable access to information and resources without barriers for PK-12 students by selecting and maintaining resources students use to understand themselves and their world.

While the study indicated a positive correlation between ability to provide equitable access and the presence of a district selection policy, there was no statistical significance: $r(15) = .38772$. The study results indicated that in general, all 24 respondents felt able to support equitable access to information and resources based on the district selection policy in place. This corresponds to previous research indicating that a selection policy often resulted in retention of materials (Rickman, 2010; Hopkins, 1991). Mean response for all 15 Likert items ranged from 6.50 to 8.00. The lowest mean item was “Unrestricted access to resources,” which still scored above a five on the 8-point Likert scale indicating agreement.

Results may be interpreted as agreement and ability to support unrestricted access to library information, resources, and space for PK-12 public school students served in their school districts. School library leaders had the ability to support the selection of resources which may be considered controversial and had the ability to provide and protect that access. Students had access to resources for personal interest as well as academic use without barriers such as age or grade restrictions. Further, students had access to the library space and resources when they needed materials. When concerns over content were presented, school library leaders were able to support equitable access to the resources in question. The school library leaders surveyed indicated they felt their

district policies provided a foundation and a level of guidance in selecting and providing equitable access to resources.

The data did suggest areas of concern for school library leaders. In the narrative section, a respondent with an overall Likert mean of 5.63 (rank 23/24) for all 15 survey items and who chose a two on the unrestricted access survey item indicated that while the district has a strong policy, uniform application is a concern. Further, the respondent shared that they did not have authority to overrule building decisions regarding age restrictions and access to resources.

Although we have a strong selection policy and reconsideration policy, we struggle with it not being applied uniformly when challenges arise. We also have pockets of schools who create their own age restrictions outside of our policies.

As a school library leader, I do not have the authority to revoke site-based policies or direct course of action when challenges arise at the district level (Respondent 18, 2021).

This inconsistency raises concern regarding the effectiveness of district selection policy when those who are knowledgeable about selection and reconsideration do not have the authority to direct the process or address variance in the policy from building to building. Another respondent who scored the reconsideration survey item with a three stated, "Policy is supportive. Procedure isn't always. What we say and what we do frequently don't match (Respondent 4, August, 2021)." This echoes research by Dawkins which found that awareness of a selection policy did not result in its use (2017). While school library leaders generally agreed that they had the ability to support access, there were concerns about the consistency of policy use. Without the consistent guidance

provided by a selection policy, conversations about equitable access and due process do not take place. Arbitrary decisions regarding the removal of resources and selection of materials are made without transparency for all stakeholders.

Results from the ranking section showed the statement “Resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas” as the highest ranked item for respondents with a selection policy (2.46) reflecting the trend in resource availability which supports all PK-12 student voices and experiences in the school library. Organizations such as “We Need Diverse Books” advocate for changes in publishing which honor the lives and experiences of all young people (2021). While school librarians have worked to provide diverse perspectives, the push toward more inclusivity in publishing has opened the door to many more resources.

Access to diverse resources and broad points of view provide all students with not only a mirror of their own experiences but a view into experiences outside of their own lives, providing a point of reference and a level of understanding. When students encounter individuals or ideas different from their own later in life, they have a foundation of understanding. Increased diverse content results in more concerns when resources deal with topics outside of the mainstream. The Office of Intellectual Freedom (OIF) tracks data regarding challenges and concerns over controversial resources. In its annual report, the OIF reported an increase in issues relating to diverse content.

As libraries work to become centers of tolerance and inclusion—providing information, resources, and programming for those who are underrepresented or marginalized in their communities—the American Library Association’s Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) has noticed a repressive pushback by those who

believe that a more diverse and just society poses a threat to their beliefs and their way of life (ALA, 2019b, p. 15).

Right to Receive

Survey ranking responses support students' right to receive information as respondents identified "Resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas" as the highest priority. Respondents with a district selection policy also ranked "Resources for intellectual growth," "Resources for individual interest," and "Environment of inquiry" as high priority. This suggests that school library leaders felt they were able to prioritize and support student right to receive information on topics of concern and interest to students while knowing that the content may be controversial.

Students have the right to receive information under the First Amendment. Court decisions regarding access to information and resources have prohibited removal of materials from school libraries at will (Shupala 2005). In *Tinker v. Des Moines School District*, school boards were found to have broad discretion, but students' First Amendment rights should be upheld (Burns, 2010). The *Kansas City Star* reported that two books were removed from a North Kansas City school because of LGBTQ+ content. The books were returned after the district was advised that students' right to receive ideas was being violated (2021). In October 2021, Texas lawmaker, Matt Krause, compiled a list of 850 titles which he believed could make students feel uncomfortable. The list was sent to the Texas Education Agency and Texas school district superintendents with a request for identification and cost of any of the books on the list. No information regarding the use of request results was shared (NPR, 2021, October 28). The OIF data

and issues such as those in Missouri and Texas suggest a movement toward a greater number of challenges and content concerns.

An understanding and use of the interpretation and board policy is crucial to maintaining and providing students with equitable access to information and resources. Using selection policy criteria, school library leaders felt able to provide resources which met the needs of their diverse learners. In addition, providing space, materials, information, and support aids students in gathering information and ideas which support independent thought and a global outlook.

Concerns over content and removal of materials, most recently surrounding LGBTQ+ topics and racial perspectives, are rooted in sensitive topics. Information and resources with a diverse perspective and broad range of ideas include not only historical and cultural viewpoints but also personal experiences such as abuse, mental health, and LGBTQ+ issues.

These are difficult and personal topics but necessary for students who are trying to understand their world. Diverse learners have diverse information needs. Some students need resources and information to help them navigate and identify experiences such as gender identity, family structure, abuse, or illness. The resources they find in the school library provide a first step in understanding and making sense of their own experiences and of those around them.

Access to Resources & Services

The study results indicate strong agreement with district selection policy as a means for supporting equitable access in the school library for all respondents. In all categories but two, mean responses were in the 5 – 8 range on the Likert scale. The

interpretation points to the school librarian as the responsible party for implementing district policy to ensure equitable access to resources and services (2014a). With training and knowledge of selection criteria and processes as part of the profession, school librarians are in a position to match content and student needs in a diverse and changing learning environment. Data from the survey item regarding school librarians as the responsible party for selection (7.38) indicated that school library leaders were in agreement and able to support school librarians as they chose and integrated resources and materials.

The school library interpretation addresses broad access and services for students in the school library as issues and needs arise in the learning environment. The interpretation focused on the concept of equitable access to diverse students' personal and instructional needs. Survey data indicates school library leaders agreed with their ability to support access to resources and services for individual interest (7.38) and intellectual growth (7.50).

The interpretation was developed in 1986 during an increase in book challenges throughout the 1980s. While not every challenge is reported to the OIF, the American Library Association's *State of America's Libraries Report 2020* reported a fourteen percent increase in materials affected by censorship in 2019 (2020, p. 17). Further, an increase in book challenges over LGBTQ+ content and books by black authors, the American Library Association issued a statement in August, 2021 condemning acts of censorship and intimidation (ALA, 2021c, para.3). This increase reflects current reports of book removal amid concerns over controversial content. The need for a broad understanding of selection policy process and practice outside of the school library

provides a foundation for those helping stakeholders understand the need for diverse points of view. Jason Reynolds, young adult author the Library of Congress's National Ambassador for Young People's Literature, has shared, in reference to current issues of censorship, that adults want children to grow up with more than they had. However, restricting children's access to the information that adults did not have is not an effective way to make this happen (*Late Night with Stephen Colbert*, 2021).

Freedom to Read

The *Students' Right to Read* statement by the National Council of Teachers of English outlines the individual's right to read as a foundation of a democratic society and states that "freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain fit matter for that reader's purpose," (para. 12). The statement further supports the idea that "suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension," (NCTE, 2018, para. 4). An increase in challenges reported by the OIF and concerns over content such as LGBTQ+ and diverse voices suggest a shift similar to the one in the 1980s. The rise in social justice issues also suggests a movement toward greater social tension. The *Students' Right to Read* statement provides additional evidence of the need for equitable access to information and resources for all students. The survey data suggests that using selection policy, school library leaders are prepared to support their school librarians in providing this access. One respondent shared that the district was currently in reconsideration over a title in question,

We are currently going through a parent request for reconsideration of the library book. Our Board Policies have helped guide our process, and the district's policy on Academic Freedom in particular has aided our district committee in supporting

the decision to keep this title available for all elementary students. The policies have been very helpful to our school librarians over the years and seen us through several book challenges (Respondent 9, 2021).

School Librarian Behaviors

A Spearman rank correlation between years of experience for all 24 respondents and overall mean score resulted in a positive correlation between the two variables (Table 41). While the overall correlation was not statistically significant, $r_s(24) = .33, p = .11$. Individual Spearman correlation analysis between years of experience and mean survey items resulted in six items with a statistically significant correlation:

Unrestricted access to resources.

Access to resources for intellectual growth.

Environment of inquiry.

Ability to maintain intellectual freedom.

Resources for personal development.

Resources for individual interest.

Survey results indicate that experience may impact district school library leaders ability to support equitable access to resources in these areas. Unrestricted access addresses the use of restricted shelving or parent permission to access some material. Some school librarians place items with potentially controversial content aside and have their own criteria for access. This may include permission from a parent. Resources for intellectual growth, personal development, and individual interest may also contain content which is controversial.

Falling under the umbrella of intellectual freedom, it is here where school library leaders have difficult conversations with stakeholders. Equitable access to resources for PK-12 students includes topics from multiple perspectives and includes topics and content which may be uncomfortable for some. Selecting and meeting the needs of diverse learners is often one of the most difficult aspects of the school library profession. Many times, the school librarian is the only person with knowledge of the selection policy and process regarding concerns over controversial materials and must be the one to step forward to remind administrators, school board members, parents and the community at large of the presence of the policy, as well as criteria used to selection materials for diverse learners. This research supports the idea that years of experience provide a foundation for conversations surrounding controversial materials.

The data suggests that years of experience as a school librarian provides a greater ability to navigate these conversations. While all parents or guardians have the right to choose content for their own child, they do not have the right to choose for all students. When there is a concern regarding content, individuals should be reminded that they may not speak for all the students who access the school library, only their own student. Speaking through the lens of access and policy, it is often the school librarian who navigates the conversation while de-escalating the many emotions surrounding the issue. Years of experience provide a foundation of knowledge and courage for navigating conversations surrounding controversial materials.

Policy

The district policy provides school library leaders and school librarians with a framework to guide evaluation of resources, selection of materials, and support the

process of reconsideration of materials when needed. While guiding these processes, the district selection policy is a reminder that regardless of emotion and intent, a process is in place to provide transparency in the evaluation process for all stakeholders.

The respondent with the lowest overall mean on all fifteen survey items (4.93) indicated district policies were in place but applied to instructional materials which included school library resources. This respondent stated that library specific policies were developed two years ago, and the school libraries in the district were operating under the more rigorous updated policies with district leadership approval and pending school board adoption. Answers were provided based on the current broader policies indicating that the existing policy did not adequately serve specific school library needs or the district's students.

Our current district approved selection policy is for all instructional materials, so library materials, textbooks, video clips, etc. are all grouped together. We have a set of library specific materials selection guidelines that were developed two years ago to better support equitable access. Access and equity and encouraging diverse perspectives are key aspects of the guidelines (Respondent 19, 2021).

Selection policy provides school library specific criteria for acquisition including student interest, diverse perspectives, and objective viewpoints. School librarians can address concerns on controversial topics by referring to school library specific criteria used to provide a wide variety of resources for students.

Significance of the Study

Selecting and defending materials is often one of the most difficult parts of being a school librarian. This includes the challenge of controversial materials found in the

school library (Dawkins, 2017). It is the selection policy, based on professional frameworks, which provides the foundation for selecting materials for diverse learners and defending intellectual freedom and student access to information. The procedures and criteria outlined in a selection policy provide a definitive course of action when there is a concern or controversial issue. Without this guidance, the door is open to retention decisions which have long lasting effects on access to the very information students seek.

In addition, because the school library may be the only library accessible to some students, an understanding of the importance of access in a school library is key. Transportation to a public library can be a barrier to access for students. In addition, free access can be determined based on residency. Those living outside the city limits may have to pay a fee for library access. The school library then becomes the place students turn to with information needs or a desire to learn about something new. While many students have a network of support to refer to understand their world, some students do not have a support system for accurate and objective information. Students rely on the school library as a source for understanding themselves and their world. The environment of inquiry encompasses not only research for academic purposes but inquiry for personal knowledge and understanding. These information needs are critical when students face something they don't understand or attempting to navigate on their own. Instead of turning to peers or friends, these students need equitable access and reliable resources in a place with a network of available resources.

This study found that school library leaders agreed they were able to support building school librarians in providing equitable access to all resources for PK-12 students using a district selection policy. However, areas of concern were unrestricted

access to resources (special shelving and parent permission) and items under reconsideration. Further, insight provided by respondents who served in a district with a selection policy stated that there was an awareness of policy, but it was not always followed, or the respondent did not have the authority to guide individual building decisions.

Results from this study may inform professional learning at all levels regarding awareness, understanding, and communication of selection policy content and use in school districts, particularly outside of the school library. An increased awareness and understanding of selection policy use merits further study. Developing a broad awareness of selection policy use with teachers, students, and parents establishes a dialogue of understanding when concerns arise. In addition, pre-service programs may benefit from the results of this study and strengthen content which addresses equity, access, and intellectual freedom concepts for new school librarians. With an understanding of the framework which a policy provides, strong school librarians can advocate for the use of policy in selection and reconsideration.

Future Research

Results from this study indicate that a district selection policy is important to school library leaders, but there lies concern in the application of the policy. Comments from respondents point to a need for understanding the use of the selection policy outside of the school library as a means to provide access before concerns over content arise. Research which focuses on existing awareness strategies for policy use may be of value. Future research may include an exploration into the authority of district school library leadership to guide selection and reconsideration according to district policy. What steps

have been taken in districts where district school library leaders have the authority to ensure that equitable access is provided and protected for all students regardless of building location? Further study regarding years of experience years of experience and access to resources in the school library may reveal additional insight.

An extension of this study may include building school librarians who serve PK-12 students. While district policy may exist, school librarians who serve buildings may not be aware of the need to understand the existence or application of selection policy.

Conclusion

District selection policies provide the foundation school librarians use in the selection process and acquisition of materials. School library leaders serve district librarians and students by supporting equitable access to resources which reflect and speak to diverse populations, needs, and experiences. The results of this study show a positive association but no statistical significance between school library leaders' ability to support equitable access and district selection policy. However, ancillary analysis shows areas of concern in providing equitable access to information and resources. While districts have selection policies, the awareness and use are not always consistent. In addition, school library leaders do not always have the authority to direct best practices and guide the process of reconsideration.

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Appendix A - Library Bill of Rights

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information (American Library Association, 2019).

Appendix B - Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights

The school library plays a unique role in promoting, protecting, and educating about intellectual freedom. It serves as a point of voluntary access to information and ideas and as a learning laboratory for students as they acquire critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in a pluralistic society. Although the educational level and program of the school necessarily shape the resources and services of a school library, the principles of the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* apply equally to all libraries, including school libraries. Under these principles, all students have equitable access to library facilities, resources, and instructional programs.

School librarians assume a leadership role in promoting the principles of intellectual freedom within the school by providing resources and services that create and sustain an atmosphere of free inquiry. School librarians work closely with teachers to integrate instructional activities in classroom units designed to equip students to locate, evaluate, and use a broad range of ideas effectively. Intellectual freedom is fostered by educating students in the use of critical thinking skills to empower them to pursue free inquiry responsibly and independently. Through resources, programming, and educational processes, students and teachers experience the free and robust debate characteristic of a democratic society.

School librarians cooperate with other individuals in building collections of resources that meet the needs as well as the developmental and maturity levels of students. These collections provide resources that support the mission of the school district and are consistent with its philosophy, goals, and objectives. Resources in school library collections are an integral component of the curriculum and represent diverse points of view on both current and historical issues. These resources include materials that support the intellectual growth, personal development, individual interests, and recreational needs of students.

While English is, by history and tradition, the customary language of the United States, the languages in use in any given community may vary. Schools serving communities in which other languages are used make efforts to accommodate the needs of students for whom English is a second language. To support these efforts, and to ensure equitable access to resources and services, the school library provides resources that reflect the linguistic pluralism of the community.

Members of the school community involved in the collection development process employ educational criteria to select resources unfettered by their personal, political, social, or religious views. Students and educators served by the school library have access to resources and services free of constraints resulting from personal, partisan, or doctrinal disapproval. School librarians resist efforts by individuals or groups to define what is appropriate for all students or teachers to read, view, hear, or access regardless of technology, formats or method of delivery.

Major barriers between students and resources include but are not limited: to imposing age, grade-level, or reading-level restrictions on the use of resources; limiting the use of interlibrary loan and access to electronic information; charging fees for information in specific formats; requiring permission from parents or teachers; establishing restricted shelves or closed collections; and labeling. Policies, procedures, and rules related to the use of resources and services support free and open access to information.

It is the responsibility of the governing board to adopt policies that guarantee students access to a broad range of ideas. These include policies on collection development and procedures for the review of resources about which concerns have been raised. Such policies, developed by persons in the school community, provide for a timely and fair hearing and assure that procedures are applied equitably to all expressions of concern. It is the responsibility of school librarians to implement district policies and procedures in the school to ensure equitable access to resources and services for all students (2015).

Appendix C - Code of Ethics of the American Library Association

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

4. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
8. 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 (Garner & Magi, 2021, p. 21).

Appendix D - Survey

Demographic

Part A

1. Gender
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Prefer Not to Answer

2. Size of District
 - a. Less than 250 Students
 - b. 250-999 Students
 - c. 1,000-1,999 Students
 - d. 2,000-4,999 Students
 - e. 5,000-9,999 Students
 - f. 10,000 or more Students

3. Years of Experience as a School Librarian?
 - a. 0-5
 - b. 6-10
 - c. 11-15
 - d. 16-20
 - e. 21+

4. Are you a member of a state or local school library organization?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Part B

School Library Leader Behaviors & Dispositions

1. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

2. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to the physical school library space.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

3. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to an environment of inquiry.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

4. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for intellectual growth.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

5. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for personal development.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

6. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources for individual interest.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

7. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

8. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable access to electronic resources.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

9. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in providing PK-12 students with equitable and unrestricted access to resources (i.e. there are no items that require parent permission and/or located on special shelves such as "6th grade only")

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

Selection Policy Impact

10. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in the selection of materials which may be considered controversial.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

11. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians' ability to maintain equitable access during the process of item reconsideration.

Highly Disagree									Highly
Agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

12. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians' ability to select items based on adopted policy criteria and procedures.

	Highly Disagree								Highly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

13. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians' ability to maintain intellectual freedom.

	Highly Disagree								Highly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

14. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians in maintaining the school library collection.

	Highly Disagree								Highly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

15. Based on district selection policy, I am able to support school librarians as the responsible parties for selection of resources.

	Highly Disagree								Highly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

Part C Insight

1. Please rank the following in order of importance. Equitable access to:

- resources which present diverse points of view and a broad range of ideas
- physical school library space
- environment of inquiry
- resources for intellectual growth
- resources for personal development
- resources for individual interest
- resources regardless of age, grade, and/or reading level
- electronic resources

- unrestricted access to resources
2. Please provide any thoughts or insight regarding your experiences with selection policy and supporting school librarians as they provide access to school library resources to PK-12 students. Your answer may be used in research results, but any identifying information will not be included.

Appendix E - Introductory Letter - Draft

IRB # 0625-21-EX

Dear School Library Leader,

I am a doctoral candidate under the direction of Dr. Elliot Ostler in the College of Education and Health, and Human Services at the University of Nebraska - Omaha. I am conducting a research study to explore the relationship between school district selection policy and district library leaders' behaviors in support of school librarians. The *Access to Resources and Services in the School Library: An interpretation of the American Library Association Bill of Rights* provides a conceptual framework for the exploration of school library leaders' behaviors regarding equity of access.

If you have a school board district selection policy in your district, you are invited to participate in this survey. Your participation will involve completing a survey and submitting it upon completion. The survey should take at a maximum 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to participate in the study or to not participate without penalty.

You will not receive any type of monetary compensation for participating in the study. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation is a greater understanding of how to support school librarians in using selection policy to provide access to PK-12 students. This study could potentially improve school library preparation programs in guiding emerging school librarians in providing and protecting access for students.

Please be assured that all of your responses will be kept confidential. The use of Qualtrics will not collect any personal information from you except the date and time of submission. The results of the study may be published but any identifying information will not be associated with the results. The data will be kept in a secure location for two years and accessible to only Dr. Ostler and myself.

If you have any Survey Items about this survey or your rights as a research participant, you may contact me, Cynthia Stogdill (cstogdill@unomaha.edu), or UNMC IRB at (402) 559-6463 or <https://www.unmc.edu/irb/>.

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