

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for K-12 Diverse Libraries

Updated May 17, 2021

Question #1: Why create a collection of diverse books?

Answer: The LCPS student population and community is diverse. In 2020-2021 LCPS served over 81,500 students with the following demographics: 43% white, 25% Asian, 18% Hispanic, 7% Black/African American, 6% Multiracial, and 1% American Indian. Beyond our own diversity, we live in a global society. Diverse books were purchased to ensure equitable access for all students.

Question #2: How were the books chosen?

Answer: The classroom libraries were chosen in accordance with LCPS School Board [Policy 5045 Selection, Review, and Challenge of Instructional Resources](#). LCPS staff, including several librarians, teachers and the Supervisors of English Language Arts and Media Services, worked to select books for each grade level library in partnership with professional collection specialists. Several criteria were considered including representation, authorship, relevance to students' lives, authentic voice, and developmental appropriateness. The elementary lists are predominantly selected from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) Diversity Book List which was vetted by hundreds of teachers across the country.

The secondary lists were also curated by LCPS staff and the Mackin collection specialist teams, using their considerable experience and training as well as the [Identity Inclusive Texts Rubric](#). (Mackin is one of our partners that has expertise in creating collections and uses a variety of culturally responsive evaluation tools to select text.) Many of the titles in the diverse book collections already are included in library catalogs within LCPS.

Question #3: How were the books selected *for* the middle school diverse classroom libraries during 2021?

Answer:

1. LCPS solicited a team of 36 teachers and administrators
 - a. Reading Specialists
 - b. Librarians
 - c. Equity Leads

- d. Classroom Teachers
 - e. Central Office Administrators
 - f. School Based Deans
2. Created teams to review the grade level curriculum libraries.
 3. Each team reviewed the recommended Mackin Classroom Specialist recommended texts to make deletions, substitutions, and additions. Decisions were made according to **Policy 5045** and by consulting multiple sources of book reviews and personal knowledge of the texts.
 4. Participants meet multiple times to ensure agreement and review.

Question #4: Is every classroom library read by every student?

Answer: No, books in the classroom libraries including the new collection of diverse books are not accessed by every student. Classroom libraries complement our robust school libraries and are provided as optional choice books for students. They are not part of the core curriculum and are not mandatory reading.

Question #5: What options exist for families and students when they are uncomfortable with the text that is assigned or selected?

Answer: Families are encouraged to talk to their children and young adults about the ideas presented in their reading. It is important at all levels, and especially at the secondary level, to acknowledge that many novels and informational pieces include sensitive topics.

Students and families are asked to speak with the **teacher** directly about any concerns. It is LCPS practice to provide an alternate text which meets the needs of a curricular unit, skill or topic while also meeting specific concerns for the student.

Question #6: How can a parent request that books or other instructional materials be reconsidered not only for their own child but for all students?

Answer: The process for challenging books in classroom libraries or any instructional resource in a school starts at the school level by **contacting the principal** and is outlined in [Policy 5045 Selection, Review, and Challenge of Instructional Resources](#). In addition to the form at the end of the regulation, there is also a link for online submission of a request to review instructional materials: