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## **PHILOSOPHY**

The primary purpose of the selection policy is to serve as a guide in the selection of instructional materials that include, but are not limited to, appropriate books, audio cassettes, computer software, slides, compact discs, records, video cassettes, transparencies, films, prints and equipment.

Policies for library media selection procedures insure that the cooperative efforts of faculty, students and parents result in the selection of appropriate library media collections.

The selection policy is designed to provide parish-wide information that must be adhered to by all school library media departments.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF MATERIALS**

Responsibility for the purchase of library and instructional materials is vested legally in the Tangipahoa Parish School System. The School System delegates to the appropriate instructional staff the responsibility of developing final recommendations for purchase.

The actual selection of library materials is the responsibility of the professionally-trained librarian who is familiar with the courses of study, the methods of teaching, and the individual needs of students within the school. The librarian, aided by suggestions from the school administrators, faculty, students and parents, makes the final selection.

## **SELECTION PRINCIPLES**

It is the policy of the Tangipahoa Parish Public Schools to select materials that support the educational goals and objectives of the district. These materials are provided in order to implement, enrich, and support the education program for the students and in accordance with the following principles:

- A. Instructional materials are chosen because they are of interest and have learning value for the students in the community. Materials are not excluded because of race, nationality, religion or political views of the writer.
- B. Materials of interest to students are provided which will promote their emotional, cultural, spiritual, and intellectual development.
- C. Insofar as it is practical, materials are provided which present all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times—international, national, and local. Books and materials of sound, factual authority are not removed or banned from the library media center because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- D. Materials in all forms are made available to attract students to reading, to viewing, to listening, and to searching in order to enable all students to experience in learning and encourage the development of learning habits for a lifetime of continuous self-improvement.
- E. Selections are made for, and in accordance with, the different maturity levels of the students.
- F. Materials are selected which fill a need related to the curriculum and or contribute to the development and enrichment of the student.
- G. In selecting materials, reviewing tools such as standard catalogs are used. When possible, materials are previewed before purchase.
- H. Selection is an ongoing process which should include the removal of materials no longer useful or appropriate and the replacement of lost or worn materials still of educational value.

## **SELECTION OBJECTIVES**

The selection of books and other media is made in accordance with the following objectives:

1. To attain the established goals
2. To enrich the curriculum
3. To further the intellectual, emotional, cultural and spiritual development of youth
4. To promote mature and responsible behavior
5. To help students gain an understanding of our pluralistic society
6. To encourage the development of reflective thinking
7. To promote lifetime reading habits
8. To appeal to the interests of students
9. To encourage educational excellence

Since financial and other limitations prevent purchasing all materials that might help to meet these objectives, it is necessary to apply certain well-conceived criteria in the selection of each item.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

All forms of print, non-print, and electronic media should be considered for use in the schools. The following criteria are considered in the selection of materials:

### **A. GENERAL POLICIES**

1. Each library's collection should be composed of materials which widen the boundaries of a child's experiences, enrich his/her life, or help him/her to fulfil their personal needs.
2. Materials should contribute directly or indirectly to the educational purposes of the school.
3. Needs and interests of children should be represented in the library collection insofar as possible.
4. Every attempt should be made to provide material at different levels of difficulty, with a diversity of appeal and different points of view on all topics included.
5. A wide range of recognized materials, classical as well as contemporary, should be included in each library.

### **B. SPECIFIC CRITERIA**

1. **GENERAL MATERIALS SELECTION** – The following criteria should be applied to the selection of all materials:
  - a. Purpose of the material
  - b. Reputation and significance of the author, publisher, or producer
  - c. Timelines or permanence of the material
  - d. Importance of subject matter to the collection
  - e. Authority in handling the subject
  - f. Reputation and standards of the publisher, author, or producer

- g. Price
- h. Appropriate grade level and appeal of the material
- i. Quality of the writing, production, or performance
- j. Quality of illustrations or graphics
- k. Recommendation in reviews or standard material list
- l. Frequency of requests for this or similar materials

2. DUPLICATES

Duplicate copies of materials are purchased only on the basis of demonstrated need since it is more desirable to purchase different titles rather than large numbers of copies of one title.

3. REPLACEMENT

Lost, damaged, or worn materials are not automatically replaced. The decision to replace an item is based on the availability of duplicates, the number of other materials in the same subject, the availability of more recent or better materials, and the continued demand for the item in question.

4. FICTION

- a. Because fiction has assumed an important role in instructional programs, the libraries purchase a variety of materials in the literary form to meet the needs and interests of students varying in reading ability, social background, and taste. Professional educators and school patrons involved in the selection process should choose fiction based on its apparent literary merit.
- b. Although it is impossible to set up a single standard of literary excellence, it is the libraries' policy to select fiction which is well written and/or produced and sometimes based on authentic human experience, and to exclude weak, incompetent, and cheaply sentimental material intentionally sensational, morbid, or erotic.

5. PERIODICALS

Periodicals are selected to provide current thought in various field and to supplement the materials collection. Individual magazines are selected by the following criteria:

- a. Accuracy and objectivity
- b. Accessibility of content through indexes
- c. Demand
- d. Value in reference services
- e. Representation of a point of view or a subject needed in the collection
- f. Local interest in the subject matter
- g. Price

6. PAMPHLETS

Selection of pamphlets is based on the same criteria as the selection of materials. Free pamphlets are included provided they do not distort facts, overemphasize commercial messages, or contain misleading statements. Propaganda pamphlets are expected to be one-sided, but only those whose propaganda intent is clearly indicated by the publisher's name or statements of purpose are included in the collection.

7. NEWSPAPERS

The libraries include newspapers to present the most current news and information. The collection may include the local newspaper, the state newspaper, and one or more newspapers of nationally-recognized merit.

8. MEDIA

Selection of media is based on the same criteria as the selection of other materials.

- a. Computer Programs or other digital media
- b. Films/ Filmstrips/Slides
- c. Cassette Tapes, Records, Compact Discs
- d. Videos

## SELECTION OF SENSITIVE MATERIALS

Subjects of Frequent Controversy - The following policies are concerned with areas of controversy:

Religion: Insofar as possible factual, unbiased material which represents all major religions should be included in the library collection.

Ideologies: The library should make available basic factual information on the level of those it serves, on any ideology or philosophy which exerts a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education, or any other phase of life.

Sex and Profanity: Materials pertaining to sex should be subjected to a test of literary/instructional merit and reality by the professional educator, who takes into consideration the school, community and existing laws. While the educators would not in any case deliberately include the sensational or overdramatic, the fact that sexual incidents or profanity appears does not automatically disqualify the material. Rather the decision is made on the basis of whether the material presents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are realistically dealt with, and whether the material is of literary/instructional value. Factual material of an educational nature on the level of the use is included in the library collection only if the material complies with existing laws.

## **POLICY ON GIFTS AND DONATIONS**

Gift materials may be accepted and used at the discretion of the principal and the librarian. They must meet the same selection criteria as purchased material.

## SELECTION AIDS

In selecting materials, the librarian should evaluate the existing collection and should consult reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids. The following recommended sources, as well as other professionally developed lists, will be consulted in the selection of materials, but selection is not limited to their listings.

1. Children's Catalog
2. Senior High School Catalog
3. The Elementary School Library Collection
4. Junior High School Catalog
5. Fiction Catalog
6. Book Lists Issued By These Organizations
  - a. National Council of Teachers of English
  - b. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
  - c. National Council for the Social Studies
  - d. National Science Teacher Association
  - e. American Association for the Advancement of Science
  - f. American Library Association
7. Book Reviewing Periodicals
  - a. Library Journal
  - b. Booklist
  - c. School Library Journal
  - d. New York Times Book Review

- e. Wilson Library Bulletin (archived database covering 1914-1995)
  - f. Horn Book
  - g. VOYA – Voice of Youth Advocates
  - h. Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books
  - i. Journal of Youth Services in Libraries
8. Selection Guides for Other Professional Materials
- a. Media and Methods
  - b. Electronic Learning
  - c. Computing Teacher
  - d. Classroom Computer Learning

## **PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING CRITICISM OF MATERIAL**

Despite the scrupulous care initiated by librarians in selecting appropriate library materials for student and teacher use, periodically, objection to a selection will be made by the public.

Therefore, it is with this projection in mind that the following procedures for addressing a complainant's challenge were designed by the school system:

- A. Establishment of an instructional materials selection policy.
- B. Establishment of procedures for addressing challenges by citizens.
- C. Organization of a review committee at the local level consisting of superintendent or his designee, library supervisor, principal, librarian, teacher, student, and parent.

Occasional objection to a selection will be made by the public, regardless of the care taken to select suitable materials for student and teacher use and the qualifications of persons who select the materials. The principles of the freedom to read and of the professional responsibility of the staff must be defended, rather than the materials.

If a complaint is made, the following procedures are to be applied:

1. Be courteous; but make no commitments.
2. Invite the complainant to file his/her objections in writing and give him/her a copy of the Parish's Reconsideration Form. He/She may then submit the formal complaint to the principal, who in turn works with the school's review committee.
3. Within five (5) days the principal will submit a copy of the completed form to the superintendent and library supervisor.
4. The superintendent or his designee will inform each school to temporarily withdraw the material from the shelves of the school library.
5. The Local Review Committee will do the following:
  - a. Read and examine the material in question;
  - b. Check the general acceptance of the material by reading reviews;

- c. Weigh positive and negative factors, then form opinions based on the material as a whole and not on passages out of context;
  - d. Meet within fifteen (15) days to discuss the material and to prepare a report on the results; and
  - e. File a copy of the report in the principal's office, the library and with the Central Office. The principal shall notify the complainant of the decision in writing within ten (10) school days of the receipt of the Local Review Committee's report.
6. If the Local Review Committee decides to withdraw the challenged material from the school, the superintendent or his designee will appoint a parish committee to review the finding of the local committee to determine if the material will be withdrawn parish-wide. The appointed committee will consist of two (2) members of the professional personnel of the school board including the library supervisor and one (1) parent.
  7. The Parish Review Committee will examine the challenged material and return a decision within fifteen (15) working days as to whether the challenged material is to be withdrawn from all parish schools permanently. The committee will submit its decision to the superintendent, who will notify the schools and the complainant of the decision of the committee.
  8. Should the Parish Review Committee disagree with the local school's decision to withdraw the challenged material from the schools permanently, the challenged material will remain removed from the shelves of that school. However, all other schools will be notified to return the challenged material to their shelves pending any future complaints from any citizens in another school district within the parish.
  9. If the concerned party is not satisfied with this decision, he/she may appeal to the Tangipahoa Parish School Board.

The Tangipahoa Parish School Board will conduct a formal hearing and render a decision.

TANGIPAHOA PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM  
Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Media

Hardcover Book \_\_\_\_\_ Paperback Book \_\_\_\_\_ Audio \_\_\_\_\_ Video \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Publisher \_\_\_\_\_

Request Initiated By \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant represents one of the following (X):

( ) Individual Name: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Other Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. To what do you object? (Be specific; cite pages or parts.)
  
2. Why do you object to this material?
  
3. For what age group would you recommend this material?
  
4. What are the strengths of this material?
  
5. Did you review all of the material?
  
6. Are you aware of the judgment of this media by literary and authoritative critics?
  
7. What do you believe is the function of this media?
  
8. What would you prefer the school do about this media?  
( ) Do not assign or recommend it to my child.  
( ) Return it to the School Committee for re-evaluation.  
( ) Withdrawn it from all students.
  
9. In it place, what media of equal quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?
  
10. Where was the media located in the school system?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Complainant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# APPENDIX

- A National Council of Teachers of English Guideline  
The Students' Right to Read
- B American Association of School Librarians Bill of Rights

## NCTE Guideline

A guideline approved by the NCTE Executive Committee and found to be consistent with NCTE positions on education issues.

### **The Students' Right to Read**

*The current edition of The Students' Right to Read is an adaptation and updating of the original Council statement, including "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Work," prepared by the Committee on the Right to Read of the National Council of Teachers of English and revised by Ken Donelson.*

#### The Right to Read and the Teacher of English

For many years, American schools have been pressured to restrict or deny students access to books or periodicals deemed objectionable by some individual or group on moral, political, religious, ethnic, racial, or philosophical grounds. These pressures have mounted in recent years, and English teachers have no reason to believe they will diminish. The fight against censorship is a continuing series of skirmishes, not a pitched battle leading to a final victory over censorship.

We can safely make two statements about censorship: first, any work is potentially open to attack by someone, somewhere, sometime, for some reason; second, censorship is often arbitrary and irrational. For example, classics traditionally used in English classrooms have been accused of containing obscene, heretical, or subversive elements. What English teacher could anticipate judgments such as the following--judgments characteristic of those made by many would-be censors:

- Plato's *Republic*: "This book is un-Christian."
- George Eliot's *Silas Marner*; "You can't prove what that dirty old man is doing with that child between chapters."
- Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*: "Very unfavorable to Mormons."
- Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*: "A filthy book."
- Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: "Too violent for children today."
- Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*: "Serves as a poor model for young people."
- Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*: "Contains homosexuality."

Modern works, even more than the classics, are criticized as "filthy," "un-American," "overly realistic," and "anti-war." Some books have been attacked merely for being "controversial," suggesting that for some people the purpose of education is not the investigation of ideas but rather the indoctrination of certain set beliefs and standards. The following statements represent complaints typical of those made against modern works of literature:

- J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*: "A dreadful, dreary recital of sickness, sordidness, and sadism." (Without much question, Salinger's book has been for some time the most widely censored book in the United States.)
- Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*: "Its repetitious obscenity and immorality merely degrade and defile, teaching nothing."

- Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "The word rape is used several times. Children should not see this in any literature book."

Some groups and individuals have also raised objections to literature written specifically for young people. As long as novels intended for young people stayed at the intellectual and emotional level of *A Date for Marcy* or *A Touchdown for Thunderbird High*, censors could forego criticism. But many contemporary novels for adolescents focus on the real world of young people--drugs, premarital sex, alcoholism, divorce, high school gangs, school dropouts, racism, violence, and sensuality. English teachers willing to defend the classics and modern literature must be prepared to give equally spirited defense to serious and worthwhile adolescent novels.

Literature about ethnic or racial minorities remains "controversial" or "objectionable" to many adults. As long as groups such as Blacks, Indians, Orientals, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans "kept their proper place"--awarded them by an Anglo society--censors rarely raised their voices. But attacks have increased in frequency as minority groups have refused to observe their assigned "place." Though nominally, the criticisms of racial or ethnic literature have usually been directed at "bad language," "suggestive situations," "questionable literary merit," or "ungrammatical English" (usually oblique complaints about the different dialect or culture of a group), the underlying motive for some attacks has unquestionably been racial. Typical of censors' criticisms of ethnic works are the following comments:

- Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*: "The book is biased on the black question."
- Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*: "Obscene and blasphemous."
- Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*: "Totally objectionable and without any literary value."

Books are not alone in being subject to censorship. Magazines or newspapers used, recommended, or referred to in English classes have increasingly drawn the censor's fire. Few libraries would regard their periodical collection as worthwhile or representative without some or all of the following publications, but all of them have been the target of censors on occasion:

- *National Geographic*: "Nudity and sensationalism, especially in stories on barbaric foreign people."
- *Scholastic Magazine*: "Doctrines opposing the beliefs of the majority, socialistic programs; promotes racial unrest and contains very detailed geography of foreign countries, especially those inhabited by dark people."
- *National Observer*: "Right-wing trash with badly reported news."
- *New York Times*: "That thing should be outlawed after printing the Pentagon papers and helping our country's enemies."

The immediate results of demands to censor books or periodicals vary. At times, school boards and administrators have supported and defended their teachers, their use of materials under fire, and the student's right of access to the materials. At other times, however, special committees have been formed to cull out "objectionable works" or "modern trash" or "controversial literature." Some teachers have been summarily reprimanded for assigning certain works, even to mature students. Others have been able to retain their positions only after initiating court action.

Not as sensational, but perhaps more important, are the long range results. Schools have removed from libraries and classrooms and English teachers have avoided using or recommending works which might make members of the community angry. Many students are consequently "educated" in a school atmosphere hostile to free inquiry. And many teachers learn to emphasize their own safety rather than their students' needs.

The problem of censorship does not derive solely from the small anti-intellectual, ultra-moral, or ultra-patriotic groups which will always function in a society that guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The present concern is rather with the frequency and force of attacks by others, often people of good will and the best intentions, some from within the teaching profession. The National Council of Teachers of English, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the American Library Association, as well as the publishing industry and writers themselves agree: pressures for censorship are great throughout our society.

The material that follows is divided into two sections. The first on "The Right to Read" is addressed to parents and the community at large. The other section, "A Program of Action," lists Council recommendations for establishing professional committees in every school to set up procedures for book selection, to work for community support, and to review complaints against any book or periodical.

### **The Right to Read**

An open letter to the citizens of our country from the National Council of Teachers of English

*Where suspicion fills the air and holds scholars in line for fear of their jobs, there can be no exercise of the free intellect. . . . A problem can no longer be pursued with impunity to its edges. Fear stalks the classroom. The teacher is no longer a stimulant to adventurous thinking; she becomes instead a pipe line for safe and sound information. A deadening dogma takes the place of free inquiry. Instruction tends to become sterile; pursuit of knowledge is discouraged; discussion often leaves off where it should begin.*

Justice William O. Douglas,

United States Supreme Court: *Adler v. Board of Education*, 1951.

The right to read, like all rights guaranteed or implied within our constitutional tradition, can be used wisely or foolishly. In many ways, education is an effort to improve the quality of choices open to all students. But to deny the freedom of choice in fear that it may be unwisely used is to destroy the freedom itself. For this reason, we respect the right of individuals to be selective in their own reading. But for the same reason, we oppose efforts of individuals or groups to limit the freedom of choice of others or to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

The right of any individual not just to read but to read whatever he or she wants to read is basic to a democratic society. This right is based on an assumption that the educated possess judgment and understanding and can be trusted with the determination of their own actions. In effect, the reader is freed from the bonds of chance. The reader is not limited by birth, geographic location, or time, since reading allows meeting people, debating philosophies, and experiencing events far beyond the narrow confines of an individual's own existence.

In selecting books for reading by young people, English teachers consider the contribution which each work may make to the education of the reader, its aesthetic value, its honesty, its readability for a particular group of students, and its appeal to adolescents. English teachers, however, may use different works for different purposes. The criteria for choosing a work to be read by an entire class are somewhat different from the criteria for choosing works to be read by small groups.

For example, a teacher might select John Knowles' *A Separate Peace* for reading by an entire class, partly because the book has received wide critical recognition, partly because it is relatively short and will keep the attention of many slow readers, and partly because it has proved popular with many students of widely differing abilities. The same teacher, faced with the responsibility

of choosing or recommending books for several small groups of students, might select or recommend books as different as Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Jack Schaefer's

*Shane*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch*, Pierre Boulle's *The Bridge over the River Kwai*, Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, or Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*, depending upon the abilities and interests of the students in each group.

And the criteria for suggesting books to individuals or for recommending something worth reading for a student who casually stops by after class are different from selecting material for a class or group. But the teacher selects, not censors, books. Selection implies that a teacher is free to choose this or that work, depending upon the purpose to be achieved and the student or class in question, but a book selected this year may be ignored next year, and the reverse. Censorship implies that certain works are not open to selection, this year or any year.

Wallace Stevens once wrote, "Literature is the better part of life. To this it seems inevitably necessary to add, provided life is the better part of literature." Students and parents have the right to demand that education today keep students in touch with the reality of the world outside the classroom. Much of classic literature asks questions as valid and significant today as when the literature first appeared, questions like "What is the nature of humanity?" "Why do people praise individuality and practice conformity?" "What do people need for a good life?" and "What is the nature of the good person?" But youth is the age of revolt. To pretend otherwise is to ignore a reality made clear to young people and adults alike on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines. English teachers must be free to employ books, classic or contemporary, which do not lie to the young about the perilous but wondrous times we live in, books which talk of the fears, hopes, joys, and frustrations people experience, books about people not only as they are but as they can be. English teachers forced through the pressures of censorship to use only safe or antiseptic works are placed in the morally and intellectually untenable position of lying to their students about the nature and condition of mankind.

The teacher must exercise care to select or recommend works for class reading and group discussion. One of the most important responsibilities of the English teacher is developing rapport and respect among students. Respect for the uniqueness and potential of the individual, an important facet of the study of literature, should be emphasized in the English class. Literature classes should reflect the cultural contributions of many minority groups in the United States, just as they should acquaint students with contributions from the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

### **The Threat to Education**

Censorship leaves students with an inadequate and distorted picture of the ideals, values, and problems of their culture. Writers may often represent their culture, or they may stand to the side and describe and evaluate that culture. Yet partly because of censorship or the fear of censorship, many writers are ignored or inadequately represented in the public schools, and many are represented in anthologies not by their best work but by their "safest" or "least offensive" work.

The censorship pressures receiving the greatest publicity are those of small groups who protest the use of a limited number of books with some "objectionable" realistic elements, such as *Brave New World*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *Johnny Got His Gun*, *Catch-22*, *Soul on Ice*, or *A Day No Pigs Would Die*. The most obvious and immediate victims are often found among our best and most creative English teachers, those who have ventured outside the narrow boundaries of conventional texts. Ultimately, however, the real victims are the students, denied the freedom to explore ideas and pursue truth wherever and however they wish.

Great damage may be done by book committees appointed by national or local organizations to ore over anthologies, texts, library books, and paperbacks to find passages which advocate, or seem to advocate, causes or concepts or practices these organizations condemn. As a result, some publishers, sensitive to possible objections, carefully exclude sentences or selections that might conceivably offend some group, somehow, sometime, somewhere.

**School Library Bill of Rights for School Library Media Center  
Programs  
Approved by  
The American Association of School Librarians Board of  
Directors**

The American Association of School Librarians reaffirms its belief in the “Library Bill of Rights” of the American Library Association. Media personnel are concerned with generating understanding of American freedoms through the development of informed and responsible citizens. To this end the American Association of School Librarians asserts that the responsibility of the school library media center is:

- A. To provide a comprehensive collection of instructional materials selected in compliance with basic written selection principles, and to provide maximum accessibility to these materials.
- B. To provide materials that will support the curriculum, taking into consideration the individual’s needs, and the varied interests, abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, maturity levels of the students served.
- C. To provide materials for teachers and students that will encourage growth in knowledge, develop literary, cultural and aesthetic appreciation, and ethical standards.
- D. To provide materials which reflect the idea and beliefs of religious, social, political, historical, and ethnic groups and their contribution to American and world heritage and culture, thereby enabling students to develop an intellectual integrity in forming judgments.
- E. To provide a written statement, approved by the local board of education, of the procedures for meeting the challenges of censorship of material in school library media centers.
- F. To provide qualified professional personnel to serve teachers and students.