



### **PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER AND PROGRAM**

The purpose of the school library media center and program is to provide instruction and material in a variety of formats to:

- Support State and District curriculum standards and initiatives
- Support language acquisition and literacy (1)
- Support District and school-based initiatives to close the achievement gap (2)
- Develop independent learners who are information literate and pursue information related to personal interests (3)
- Support personal interests and reference needs of students through self-selection of materials (3)
- Develop a life-long love of reading and learning (4)

- (1) Krashen, Stephen. *The Power of Reading*. Libraries Unlimited, 1993. p.23: "Reading may be the only way to develop literacy skills."
- (2) Lance, Keith Curry et al. *The Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement*. Hi Willow Research and Publishing, 1993. p.iv
- (3) California School Library Association. *Standards and Guidelines for Strong School Libraries*. CSLA, 2004. p.66: Standard 4
- (4) Loertscher, David. *Taxonomies of the School Library Media Program*. Libraries Unlimited, 1988. p.37

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## THE STUDENTS' RIGHT TO READ

### **The Right to Read**

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.

### **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 series of continuing 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 or irrational.

Some groups and individuals have also raised objections to literature written specifically for young people. ...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.

### **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...

Excerpted from National Council of Teachers of English, *The Students' Right to Read*, NCTE, 1981.