

## Classroom Fiction: Selection Considerations

*“Children need books that are mirrors that allow them to see themselves and their own experiences; windows that they can look through to see other worlds; and sliding glass doors that allow them to enter other worlds.”* – Rudine Sims Bishop

### What is the SD38’s Resource Selection Policy?

SD38’s Resource Selection Policy [513.4R Selection of Learning Resources](#) outlines criteria for selecting all resources for educational use.

### What are some reputable sources for book choices?

- [Focused Education K-12 Evaluated Resource Collection](#)
- [Authentic First People's Resources from FNEESC](#) or <https://resources.fnesc.ca>
- [Canadian Children’s Book Centre](#)

### SD38 Strategic Plan

2.2.4 - *Ensure students and staff have access to current and relevant learning resources that reflect the diversity of, and the challenges faced by our community and the world.*

### Why do classroom resources need to be continuously evaluated?

*“It is important to remove resources that no longer meet selection principles. Knowledge evolves over time, attitudes shift, societal values expand and evolve, and we begin to see historical and social events from different perspectives. A resource that was selected a decade or more ago may have reflected understandings of the time, but assessed through the lens of current knowledge and understandings, may now fall short.”*

– Canadian School Libraries Equity Diversity Toolkit

It is important to continuously re-evaluate classroom and library resources and remove items that have outdated or inaccurate information, or no longer serve the learning needs and reading interests of students at the school. It is important to ensure that resources remain relevant, responsive, and current, so that they accurately and respectfully represent our local, broader and global communities.

### References:

BC Teacher Librarian's Association. “Evaluating, Selecting and Acquiring Learning Resources: A Guide.” *BCTLA*, [https://bctla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/erac\\_wb.pdf](https://bctla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/erac_wb.pdf).

“Collection Diversity Toolkit.” *Canadian School Libraries*, 2022, <https://www.canadianschoollibraries.ca/collection-diversity-toolkit/>.

“Course: Selecting Learning Resources for the Classroom.” *Focused Education*, 11 Jan. 2023, <https://focusedresources.ca/en/course-selecting-learning-resources-classroom>.

## Classroom Fiction: Selection Considerations

The questions below serve as introductory guidelines for consideration when selecting resources for classroom use. Many also apply to library resources; however, in some cases, links to curriculum, opportunities for critical thinking, representation etc. may not be central to all library materials. This is not an exhaustive list; additional criteria should be considered when selecting digital resources, textbooks, and non-fiction.

*(Criteria drawn from Focused Education, Canadian School Libraries, SD38 Resource Selection Policy)*

*Please note: The resource being considered may not meet all of the considerations below; for those it does not, consideration as to the merit of the resource may mean it continues to be included, with rationale. If you have questions about a particular resource, please contact the Coordinator for Libraries and Information Services.*

***Please also refer to the “Indigenous Resource Selection Criteria” guide.***

Content and Curriculum Alignment
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the resource free from bias, propaganda, and discrimination? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the content current, timely and important for students’ broad understandings? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the content appropriate and safe for the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the resource support the goals, objectives, and curricular and core competencies of the BC curriculum? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?
Language
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the text free of harmful, outdated, stereotypical language?
Equity Considerations
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Authorship:</b> Is the author a credible voice from the community being represented? If the author is not from the group they are representing, are they allies who have worked closely with members of the group? <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Representation:</b> Is there diverse representation in terms of race, ethnicity, class, SOGI and ability? Is this diversity represented in main characters, or relegated to minor or token roles? Are these characters represented in a one-dimensional, stereotypical way? <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Story:</b> Whose stories are centred? Does the story represent a range of experiences of groups, or does it focus on a deficit narrative about those groups? Does it reinforce or disrupt stereotypes? Are the characters with underrepresented identities the heroes of the story, or the ones being “saved”? Are some groups represented only in stereotypical settings?
Literary Merit
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the resource show insight into the complexity of the human condition? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the resource broaden students’ experiences and understanding? <input type="checkbox"/> To what degree is this text stylistically rich in terms of themes, language, characterization etc.?
Currency and Engagement
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the resource current? Is there a more current resource that could replace it? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the resource interesting, engaging and age-appropriate?
Reviews
<input type="checkbox"/> Has the resource been evaluated or recognized by Focused Education, FNEC or another reputable source? <input type="checkbox"/> Has the resource received any recent notable awards or recognition?

**Sample Reconsideration #1**

<b>Sample Reconsideration #1</b>	
<b>Resource</b>	<i>The Sign of the Beaver</i> by Elizabeth George Speare
<b>SD38 Resource Selection Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Rights Code:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does not reflect awareness and perspectives of Indigenous peoples.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is fair, objective, free of bias, propaganda, and discrimination               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discriminates against Indigenous peoples (see below for examples)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Classroom Fiction Selection Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content and Curriculum Alignment:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Harmful stereotypes of Indigenous peoples</li> <li>○ Cultural misrepresentations (i.e.: Indigenous dance is referred to as “ridiculous contortions... like a clown in a village fair”)</li> <li>○ The protagonist appropriates Indigenous dance</li> <li>○ Harmful, outdated language may create unsafe environment for Indigenous students</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Language:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Harmful slurs regarding Indigenous peoples</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Equity Considerations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Authorship: author is not Indigenous</li> <li>○ Representation: Indigenous characters are one-dimensional/stereotypical</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Currency and Engagement:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Published in 1983 (40 years old)</li> <li>○ Can easily be replaced by a broad array of current novels, written by Indigenous authors, centering Indigenous voice, experience, and perspectives. See FNEESC and Focused Education for book lists.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviews:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not recommended by FNEESC</li> <li>○ Not evaluated by Focused Education</li> <li>○ Newbery Award Medal (but this is not <i>recent</i> recognition)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>SD38 Indigenous Resources Selection Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorship:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not Indigenous</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Authenticity:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does not meet criteria of authentic voice, themes and issues relevant to First Peoples, FP techniques</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Local representation:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No – the story takes place in Maine</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Content:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Harmful stereotypes of Indigenous peoples. Harmful, outdated language. Cultural misunderstandings. Appropriation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recognition/reviews:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not recommended by FNEESC</li> <li>○ Not evaluated by Focused Education</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions:</b> Based on these criteria, this book no longer aligns with district guidelines and should not be used.	

## Sample Reconsideration #2

<b>Resource</b>	<i>Underground to Canada</i> by Barbara Smucker
<b>SD38 Resource Selection Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content and language</li> <li>• Human Rights Code</li> <li>• Supports curriculum</li> <li>• Is fair, objective, free of bias, propaganda, and discrimination</li> <li>• Meets the requirements of copyright and privacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content and Language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The language is inappropriate and harmful (see details below)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is fair, objective, free of bias, propaganda, and discrimination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Presents a biased version of Black history from a white perspective (see details below)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Classroom Fiction Selection Considerations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content and Curriculum Alignment</li> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Equity Considerations</li> <li>• Literary Merit</li> <li>• Currency and Engagement</li> <li>• Reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Harmful, racist slurs regarding Black people may create unsafe environment for Black students</li> <li>○ Harmful language towards people with disabilities and may cause harm</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Equity Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Authorship: The author is white.</li> <li>○ Story: The story reinforces the “white saviour” narrative, painting kindly slave-owners and mostly white heroes. It minimizes the effects of slavery and its impact. It perpetuates the myth of Canada as a benevolent, safe haven, when history has shown that Black slaves suffered discrimination and violence once in Canada.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Currency and Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Published in 1977 (46 years old)</li> <li>○ Can easily be replaced by a broad array of current novels written by Black authors, both Canadian and American. The historical experiences, trauma and stories of Black slaves should be told by Black authors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Was formerly evaluated by Focused Education but has been removed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusions:</b> Based on these criteria, this book no longer aligns with district guidelines and should not be used.</p>	