AASL Standards Framework Applied to LGBTQ+ Materials

Defending Intellectual Freedom: LGBTQ+ Materials in School Libraries, a resource guide developed by the 2018 ALA Emerging Leaders team sponsored by AASL, uses the National School Library Standards as a lens to support LGBTQ+ inclusive library collections, instruction, and spaces. Use this framework application as a secondary table of contents to navigate more relevant resources, inspiration, statistics, and activities based on your specific questions and needs. To access the complete resource guide, visit www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/tools/toolkits.

THINK

• What do you already know about LGBTQ+ materials and protecting intellectual freedom in the school library? What would you like to know? What falls outside your comfort zone?
• How can you address your biases, fears, and concerns about LGBTQ+?
• Why do librarians “self-censor” their own collections?

ACTIVITIES
• Create a KWL (Know, Want to Know, and Learned) chart to explore as you begin to think about LGBTQ+ materials and intellectual freedom (Appendix A).

CREATE

• Investigate the questions you developed from the THINK Domain, focusing first on the questions that you know need to be followed up by investigating the questions that make you feel most uncomfortable.

• Do you know where to begin, start with suggested readings from the National Coalition Against Censorship, ALA’s Freedom to Read Statement, and others listed.

SHARE

• Build a network to investigate and grow your capacity to define LGBTQ+ materials.
• Make a list of stakeholders, peers, and potential networks with whom you could share.
• Send or post your comments and questions to these organizations, networks, and discussion forums.
• Find a peer who wants to grow in their ability to serve their LGBTQ+ community.

GROW

• What is a sustainable learning path to stay aware of LGBTQ+ issues and how they connect with school libraries?
• How can you put your newfound understandings into your instruction, collections, pedagogical approach, and district initiatives?
• Revisit your KWL, chart to see how you have grown and what questions you still have.

INQUIRE

• What do you already know about LGBTQ+ materials and protecting intellectual freedom in the school library? What would you like to know? What falls outside your comfort zone?
• How can you address your biases, fears, and concerns about LGBTQ+?
• Why do librarians “self-censor” their own collections?

ACTIVITIES
• Create a KWL (Know, Want to Know, and Learned) chart to explore as you begin to think about LGBTQ+ materials and intellectual freedom (Appendix A).

INCLUDE

• How do you think about diversity? Does it relate to school or library materials?
• Why do you think school or library materials should be selected to see positive representations of themselves and people from different walks of life?

ACTIVITIES
• Watch “The Danger of a Single Story” video.
• Watch the “Why We Need Diverse Books” video.
• Read the Human Rights Campaign “Glossary of Terms.”

COLLABORATE

• How can collaboration with school and community partners be leveraged to build a stronger LGBTQ+ collection for the benefit of all learners?
• How can you collaborate with teachers to embed LGBTQ+ issues into the curriculum?

ACTIVITIES
• Community assessment.
• Examining our PLNs.
• Assessing school climate via learners and staff.

CURATE

• Are you collecting LGBTQ+ titles that reflect a wide range of gender identities and experiences, or are you self-censoring those titles out of fear of retaliation from administration or other community members?

ACTIVITIES
• Look at your current displays. Are titles featuring LGBTQ+ characters a natural part of your shelf and wall displays?
• Identify ways you can avoid self-censorship and create diverse, inclusive collections.
• Review your collection development policy to make sure LGBTQ+ collections are specifically included.

EXPLORE

• How can you examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of your library’s LGBTQ+ collection?
• Implement a system for gathering learner feedback on LGBTQ+ titles to share with other learners and to support the title in the event of a challenge. Start a spreadsheet of reader feedback.

ENGAGE

• How can school librarians explore their own biases?
• What might you add to your reading list to expand your perspectives?
• How can you reflect more on your professional practices and develop your own growth mindset?

ACTIVITIES
• Take an implicit bias test from Project Implicit.
• Read an article or book about anti-bias education or intersectionality.
• Undertake a self-reflection activity.

• Know your policies and make sure all stakeholders know them, too.

ACTIVITIES
• Create displays that encourage learners to engage with LGBTQ+ issues.
• Create activities designed to engage learners with issues of censorship during Banned Books Week.
• Create PD to educate library staff, educators, and administration about LGBTQ+ materials and procedures.