



## Have Intellectual Freedom and Privacy Questions?

**HELP IS ON THE WAY!**

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# Despite the flux and instability in education, the importance of intellectual freedom principles remains constant.

School librarians are experiencing upheaval and controversy in education today. They are coping with the implementation of (and battles over) the Common Core State Standards, the uncertain future of their jobs, and the rapidly changing nature of school libraries. Despite the flux and instability in education, the importance of intellectual freedom principles remains constant. Students still need:

- equitable access to information providing differing perspectives from numerous sources,
- instruction in multiple literacies, including evaluation of sources and the ethical use of information,
- fiction books with strong characters to help students make sense of their lives,
- privacy when researching sensitive topics, and
- an advocate to overcome economic, language, and technological barriers.

By protecting intellectual freedom, school librarians can make a big difference in students' lives and education. It is not always easy, and there is no shortage of concerns and questions.

## Looking for Answers?

Where can school librarians find up-to-date guidance on intellectual freedom and privacy matters? One good source is the September/October 2015 *Knowledge Quest*, which will offer practical advice for *KQ* readers. Here's a sample of topics that will be addressed in the intellectual freedom-themed issue:

- What if a group in your community wants to "protect" students from reading books and researching topics such as gay marriage, abortion, euthanasia, animal rights, birth control, or Islam? Do minors in public schools have legal rights to read and research these subjects freely in school libraries? A lawyer will lay out the answer in terms you and your principal can understand.
- If a parent brings concerns about a graphic novel and files a formal written request for its review, do you know who to call for help? You'll meet the people who staff the American Library Association (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom and offer assistance during challenges to library and curricular resources.

- Are you wondering how to get your principal and colleagues on the same page about students' access to diverse library materials from differing perspectives? A well-known school library advocate will share advice on leadership and creating an intellectual freedom-friendly culture.
- When a challenge occurs, do you wonder how your administrators and school board members will react? Will they follow district policy or summarily direct the book to be removed from the shelf? Read the first-hand experiences of an administrator and a school board member who have worked to resolve real-world challenges to school resources while protecting students' access to ideas.
- Are you plagued with overly restrictive Internet filtering? When students in your school research contemporary social issues, do they encounter blocked websites? We'll have an article about the impact of

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- filtering on students' education, along with helpful strategies.
- If a local police officer asks who has borrowed a specific book from your library, what should you do? Are you obliged to turn over the name of the student who checked out the item? Learn the answer and find out about ALA's useful privacy resources including the "Privacy Tool Kit" (2014) and "Questions and Answers on Privacy and Confidentiality" (2012).
- Does the ALA Code of Ethics still have relevance for you in the areas of copyright, privacy, and censorship? Are you aware that ALA now has a professional statement on copyright, "Copyright: An Interpretation of the Code of Ethics"? Discover how the over seventy-five-year-old Code of Ethics can help guide your decision-making when facing current ethical dilemmas.

- What's your go-to source for information on intellectual freedom? For decades, librarians have turned to the ALA *Intellectual Freedom Manual* for advice on topics from access to information to privacy to censorship issues. In our upcoming *KQ* issue, the editor of the 9th edition of the manual will preview the changes and improvements that make this classic resource even more valuable to school librarians.

## *KQ*'s Online Content

In addition to the print copy of *Knowledge Quest*, exclusive content will be available to read online or download (PDF):

- Where can you find the most useful intellectual freedom and privacy resources online? Check out a clickable list of our top ten websites.
- Want to know how school librarians working in international

schools protect their students' intellectual freedom? An experienced school library professional will discuss collection development policy, resource selection, and how challenges are resolved.

- School populations are increasingly diverse, and all students deserve equitable access to the school library. How can school librarians meet the needs of homeless students, English language learners, and those who are economically disadvantaged? Get a snapshot of what it's like for one school librarian to ensure access to school library resources and services for students with a wide range of special needs.
- Wondering how labeling and rating systems affect students' access to school library materials? An experienced school library supervisor will enlighten readers about the difference between

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viewpoint-neutral directional labeling and prejudicial labeling.

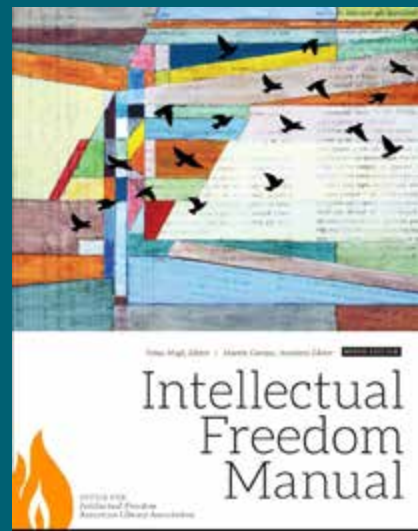
### Why Intellectual Freedom Remains Important

Despite the uncertainties in education today, intellectual freedom is as essential as ever. Students need access to information and privacy if they are to become well-educated adults who can locate and evaluate information, synthesize ideas from many sources, and make wise decisions. Young people are counting on school librarians to help create a culture in which inquiry, research, and reading are celebrated and supported. Watch for the September/October 2015 issue of *Knowledge Quest*, and pick up valuable tools and strategies for doing this crucial work.



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online instructor for Mansfield University (PA) and serves as a trustee of the Freedom to Read Foundation, a member of the ALA Committee on Professional Ethics and the Knowledge Quest Editorial Board. She is coauthor of *Privacy in the 21st Century: Issues for Public, School, and Academic Libraries* (*Libraries Unlimited* 2005), and author of *Ensuring Intellectual Freedom and Access to Information in the School Library Media Program* (*Libraries Unlimited* 2008) and *Protecting Intellectual Freedom and Privacy in Your School Library* (*Libraries Unlimited* 2013).



### HOT OFF THE PRESS!

The *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, 9th edition, will be available through the ALA Store <[www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org)> beginning in April 2015. A *History of ALA Policy on Intellectual Freedom: A Supplement to the Intellectual Freedom Manual* can be purchased from ALA in June 2015.