

THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN'S GUIDE TO COLLECTION ASSESSMENT

As you collect your books at the end of the school year, you may also want to consider assessing your collection. Assessment is the first step towards understanding your collection's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth. This information is invaluable when deciding what to add to your collection and what to remove from your collection.

A step-by-step guide for assessing your school library collection:

1. **Establish Goals and Objectives:** Define the purpose of the collection assessment. Determine what you hope to achieve through the assessment process, such as identifying gaps in the collection or evaluating its relevance to curriculum standards.
2. **Gather Data:** Collect relevant data to inform your assessment. This may include circulation statistics, usage data from library management systems, surveys or feedback from students and educators, and observations of library usage patterns.
3. **Review Collection Policies and Criteria:** Familiarize yourself with the library's collection development policies and selection criteria. Understand the guidelines for adding new materials to the collection and the criteria for weeding or removing outdated or irrelevant items.
4. **Conduct a Collection Inventory:** Perform a comprehensive inventory of the library collection to assess its current status. Create an inventory spreadsheet or use library management software to catalog all materials, including books, periodicals, multimedia resources, and digital materials.
5. **Evaluate Collection Content:** Assess the content of the collection to determine its strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Consider factors such as currency, accuracy,

relevance to curriculum standards, and alignment with the needs and interests of the school community.

6. **Analyze Circulation Data:** Review circulation statistics to identify popular and frequently used materials, as well as items that may be underutilized or outdated. Analyze circulation patterns to understand student reading preferences and borrowing behaviors.
7. **Assess Collection Condition:** Evaluate the physical condition of materials in the collection, including wear and tear, damage, and outdated or deteriorating items. Determine if any materials require repair, replacement, or removal from the collection.
8. **Seek Input from Stakeholders:** Gather feedback from students, educators, and parents about their perceptions of the library collection. Conduct surveys, focus groups, or interviews to solicit input on the types of materials they would like to see added or removed from the collection.
9. **Identify Areas for Improvement:** Based on your analysis of the data and feedback from stakeholders, identify areas where the collection could be enhanced or expanded. This may include adding new materials to address curriculum needs or updating outdated resources.
10. **Develop an Action Plan:** Create a plan of action based on your assessment findings. Outline specific steps for improving the collection, such as purchasing new materials, weeding outdated items, or promoting underutilized resources.
11. **Implement Changes:** Take action to implement the recommendations outlined in your action plan. Acquire new materials, remove outdated items, organize displays or thematic collections, and update catalog records as needed.
12. **Monitor Progress:** Regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes made to the collection. Track circulation statistics, gather feedback from library users, and reassess the collection periodically to ensure that it continues to meet the evolving needs of the school community.

By following these steps, you can conduct a comprehensive assessment of your library collection and make informed decisions to enhance the resources available to your students and educators.