

# This Issue

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This issue addresses the recent spate of challenges and book bans that impede collection development processes and practices in today's charged political environment. Additionally, it includes articles and reports that discuss policies, legislation, library funding, staffing, and praxis that sustain collection development policies that promote diverse materials and content.

Our opening article, "Legislating Librarianship Redux" by Jill A. Work, argues for the defense of local librarians and library boards to create collections that reflect their local populations, but also to curate balanced collections that reflect a variety of viewpoints, genres, cultures and ideologies. Work impressively culls together a well-documented roster of legislative cases that seek to impede the authority of local librarians and library boards to develop broader, more diverse collections. This list of legislations signals an alarming escalation in the scope of legislative hurdles designed to constrain intellectual freedom in school and public libraries.

The second article, "Not Doing It: Avoidance and Sex-Related Materials in Libraries" by Rebeca C. Jefferson and Ewa Dziedzic-Elliott, draws attention to a seldom recognized issue: Are we as librarians doing enough to develop library collections that provide an adequate level of access to materials related to sex, gender, and sexuality that our patrons need? As our authors astutely point out such materials and the librarians who acquire them are under external, pre-emptive assaults, including threats of legal action, personal attack, and targeted harassment campaigns. On the other hand, librarians face internal struggles and sometimes must navigate obstacles of affective discomfort, uncertainty, and emotional reactivity around sexual issues. These internal struggles often lead to avoidance of collection development tasks in this area, and result in unintended, real-world consequences for vulnerable populations.

Bill Crowley's white paper, "Socially Just Library Management in Conservative America," identifies some of the cultural challenges that face progressive library directors and administrators, particularly in public libraries, operating within conservative Republican municipalities and counties. The author offers pragmatic advice and approaches to deal effectively with the thorny issues of critical race theory, African-American-white relations, identity politics, and advancing social justice within conservative districts.

The final four pieces discuss library funding and staffing, of which two are reports. "Funding Our Priorities: Comparisons of Public Library Funding and Services with Other Sectors in Post-COVID America," by A. J. Million and Jenny Bossaller reports on public library expenditures, staffing and revenue data, and compares overlapping services with other local government services, such as fire protection, policing and schools, in order to assess the current state of library funding and support. "School Library Staffing Ratios and Student Outcomes: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom," by EveryLibrary Institute Staff

reports and analyzes the current data available on the impact of school libraries and librarians and media specialists. It includes a broad diagnosis and establishes general goals for all advocates to be effective. Peter D. Pearson's white paper, "Sustaining Local Library Advocacy in Today's Political Environment," offers advice for navigating local library advocacy efforts through two straits: sustainable operational funding and the library's commitment to intellectual freedom, which is chiefly embodied in its unimpeded ability to develop an integral collection that serves the entire community. Our final article, "Less Whining, More Dining: The Importance of Relationship Building in Library Advocacy," by Michael Carlozzi joins theory with praxis. The author applies research by Cheryl Stenström and Ken Haycock on the theory of "liking" developed by Robert Cialdini's framework of interpersonal influence, which posited six tactics for influencing decision makers, to the practical work of increasing library funding at two library locations: the Wareham Free Library in Massachusetts, and the East Providence Public Library in Rhode Island. His advice and proven experience suggests that if one approaches local funding authorities as people who may like you, they may be more inclined to fund your library.

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